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THE
DUBLIN MAGAZINE

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APRIL—JUNE, 1951.

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DIARMUID AND GRANIA

A Play in Three Acts

BY

GEORGE MOORE

AND

W. B. YEATS

Now first printed

With an introductory note

BY

William Becker

WRITTEN partly in London, partly in Dublin, and partly at Coole, DIARMUID AND GRANIA was finished in December, 1900.

Neither Yeats nor Moore thought the play worthy of publication at the time of its original (and only) production, though both have left long and amusing accounts of its composition (see Moore's AVE and Yeats's DRAMATIS PERSONAE 1896-1902). And subsequently, the few complete typescripts used by the actors disappeared, leaving only a stack of haphazard manuscript notes and incomplete drafts among Yeats's private papers. Thus until the discovery of the typescript on which the present version is based, the play was commonly thought to be lost. This typescript, although it contains various manuscript corrections by both men, seems to have been Moore's and was given to its present owner by Lady Cunard shortly before her death.

How much of the writing is Yeats's and how much Moore's is now impossible to tell. In fact, there is every possibility that Lady Gregory and Arthur Symons also had their fingers in the pie in a small way. Lady Gregory, at least, prepared the original synopsis of the Diarmuid and Grania legend from which Yeats and Moore worked, and seems to have refereed a good many of their quarrels. For nearly two years, work on the play proceeded in a factious and wayward fashion before a version finally emerged that was satisfactory to both men. Yet there does seem to have been a set of principles behind the collaboration, even a rather strict set, and tempers frequently flared over infringements and demands for concessions. The following hitherto unpublished draft of a letter from Yeats to Moore gives a clear indication of their procedure :

My dear Moore : You say both should make concessions. I think so too, but I have so far made them. I have recognized that you have a knowledge of the stage, a power of construction, a power of inventing a dramatic climax far beyond me, and I have given way again and again. I have continually given up motives and ideas that I preferred to yours, because I admitted your authority to be greater than mine. On the question of style however I will make no concessions. Here you need give way to me. Remember our original compact was that the final words were to be mine. I would never have begun the play at all, but for this compact. It is no use going on with the work at all if we are not clear on this point. I send you what seems to me a sufficient version of Act I. I will listen to any suggestions you make, or consider any emendations of language as I have always done, but the final version must be in words of mine or in such words of yours as I may accept. Remember that this is the original compact. If I hear that you have accepted this Act I, I will go on to Act II. It will be a pity if we fall out over a few phrases after so much planned work together.

There is only one alternative and this is the alternative I offered you some weeks ago. I will accept any form of words of yours that Arthur Symons approves of. I have perfect trust in his judgement and so should you as you have got him to revise a novel. This was no part of our compact but it seems to me reasonable.

In later years, a sizeable rift came to separate Yeats and Moore; and Yeats was outraged by the original publication of certain attacks on himself and Lady Gregory which latter appeared in a softened form in HAIL AND FAREWELL. A note in Yeats's 1909 Diary reads as follows:

On George Moore:

*Moore once had visits from the muse
But fearing that she would refuse
An ancient lecher took to geese
He now gets novels at his ease.*

Made long ago but written now because it comes up into memory, and it may amuse me in some moment of exasperation with that artless man.

On completion, the play was shown to Forbes-Robertson and to Mrs. Patrick Campbell before F. R. Benson finally agreed to produce it in Dublin. In a letter to Lady Gregory dated 27 December 1900, Yeats gives an amusing and apropos account of the interview with Mrs. Pat:

The shields are the success of the play with her. Moore told her they were my work and she said almost the moment she saw me: "O Mr. Yeats the opening of Act I is wonderful. Why did you not do the whole play?" I then of course explained how essential Moore had been. She went on "I am sure I know what part you have done and what part he has done for sometimes the words are beautiful and sometimes they are like a French Novel and spoil everything." She then quoted the part about "your eyes are grey" as beautiful and said "It would make an actress crazy with excitement merely to have such things spoken over her" and she took up the play and read them out to somebody who was there. She has begged me to read the play to her right through that she may point out places where she thinks it needs some verbal improvement. This is a delicate matter—I don't quite know how Moore will like it but she is right. When one has to give up one's own standard as I have had to do in this play, one rather loses the power of judging at all. I told her that I was just a lyric poet and that Moore was a very considerable dramatist and she answered "Well you have made a very great work between you" and quoted Max Beerbohm who had said "But where do they begin to come together?" I gave her "The Shadowy Waters" but her chief interest seemed to be, had I written "a beautiful inscription" to her but alas I had only written "Mrs. Patrick Campbell from W. B. Yeats" and slurred over the word "Campbell" because I was not sure of the spelling.

Final arrangements with the Bensons for the production were left entirely to Moore, who evidently undertook the task with considerable relish. On August 8th 1901, he wrote to Yeats:—

I have spent the day with the Bensons and a very satisfactory day it was. We went through the play and they will begin to rehearse it at Brighton and will continue rehearsing it. They evidently think very highly of it and will (I think) play it all the week. They will be obliged to for Forbes

Robertson will be in Dublin for the same week and with Robertson in Dublin Benson will I think feel it would be useless for him to play Shakespeare. He is very much taken with the idea of the sheep shearing. He says he will carry in a sheep. I told him a sheep is a difficult animal to carry but he says there will be no difficulty for him. The stage will show fleeces hung about, there will be branding irons and crooks ; Cormac will watch the shearing and when Diarmuid and the shepherd have carried out the kicking animal Cormac will out with his lament. I cannot tell you how pleased I am ; I walk about the streets thinking of the fleeces and the sheep. The shearing will take the audience back to the beginnings of things. Man has shorn sheep since the beginning and the wars and the strive [sic] will break in upon Arcady as they always have done. I cannot tell you how pleased I am, I am only sorry that you are not here to rejoice with me . . . If you were to send a couple of paragraphs to the Irish papers about the piece you would be doing good work—the sheep-shearing would make a nice paragraph, Benson as an athlete carrying out the bleating beast. I don't mind if the audience laughs, better that it should laugh—the scene will put them in good humour to listen to the act.

The play was first performed 21 October, 1901, at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, by the F. R. Benson Company at the request of the Irish Literary Theatre. Music for the play was specially composed by Edward Elgar. The cast was as follows :

<i>King Cormac</i>	....	ALFRED BRYDONE
<i>Finn MacCool</i>	....	FRANK RODNEY
<i>Diarmuid</i>	....	F. R. BENSON
<i>Goll</i>	....	CHARLES BIBBY
<i>Usheen</i>	....	HENRY AINLEY
<i>Caoelle</i>	....	E. HARCOURT WILLIAMS
<i>Fergus</i>	....	G. WALLACE JOHNSTONE
<i>Fathna</i>	....	WALTER HAMPDEN
<i>Griffan</i>	....	STUART EDGAR
<i>Niall</i>	....	MATHESON LANG
<i>Conan the Bald</i>	....	ARTHUR WHITBY
<i>An Old Man</i>	....	H. O. NICHOLSON
<i>A Shepherd</i>	....	MR. OWEN
<i>A Boy</i>	....	ELLA TARRANT
<i>A Young Man</i>	....	JEAN MACKINLAY
<i>Grania</i>	....	MRS. F. R. BENSON
<i>Laban</i>	....	LUCY FRANKLEIN

For permission to publish the play and the letters included in this note, I am indebted to Mrs. Yeats and to Mr. C. D. Medley, George Moore's literary executor. I should also like to express my gratitude to Mr. J. Millward, owner of the original typescript from which this version of the play is taken, for his kind and unfailing patient co-operation.

W. B.

OXFORD, November, 1950.

DIARMUID AND GRANIA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING CORMAC	....	....	....	The High King.
FINN MACCOOLE	....	....	....	The Chief of the Fianna.
DIARMUID	}	....	....	His chief men.
GOLL				
USHEEN				
CAOELTE				
CONAN THE BALD	....	....	....	One of the Fianna.
NIALL	....	....	....	A head servant.
FERGUS	}	....	....	Spearmen.
FATHNA				
GRIFFAN				
GRANIA	....	....	....	The King's daughter.
LABAN	....	....	....	A druidess.
AN OLD MAN				
A BOY				
A YOUNG MAN				
A SHEPHERD				
THE FOUR TROOPS OF THE FIANNA				
SERVING MEN				

ACT I.

The banqueting hall in Tara. A table at the back of the stage on a dais. Pillars in front. There are doors to the right and left. A number of Serving Men are laying the table for the feast. Niall is directing them. There is a spinning wheel to left.

NIALL : Do not put the salmon there ; put it in front of the chief man at the feast.

BOY : Is not the King the chief man at a feast ?

NIALL : Not at a wedding feast ; the chief man at a wedding feast is the man comes to be wed.

BOY : Where shall I put the boar's head ?

NIALL : Put it where the old King used to sit, Art, King Cormac's father, Art the Melancholy they used to call him. He was deaf at the left ear, and he was always complaining that the meat was hard, and that the wind came under the door. Yes, Boy, under this roof a hundred kings have sat, right back to Ollam Fodla that made the laws. What meals they have eaten ! What ale they have drunk ! Before Cormac there was Art, and before Art there was Conn,

BOY: Was that Conn the Hundred Fighter?

NIALL: Yes, Conn the Hundred Fighter they used to call him and he knew a hare was put before him if the fire had been bright behind it; and he knew if the swine's flesh had been dried in the smoke of a whitehorn tree. Put the curds over there; it is not the curds but the trotters and cow-heel that used to be put there, for that was the place of the king's fool. One day he flouted the Fianna on the high road, and they hanged him on an apple tree.

BOY: Did they hang the king's fool in time of peace?

NIALL: Fool, or wise man, war or peace, it's all one to them when their pride is up. But they are great men. Bring the dishes quickly, it is time for their messenger to be here. Put the bread there, Art's wife, Queen Maeve, used to sit there, Maeve the Half Ruddy they called her, and she liked thin barley cakes, and six men got their death because of her. (*To the Servants*). Bring in the flagons; put them here, where Art's hound used to lie. (*A knocking at the door*). Here is the messenger of the Fianna. I knew we should not get done in time. Bring in the flagons. (*To the Servants*). Where are the drinking horns? (*More knocking. He goes to the door and opens it. Conan comes in. He is a fat rough man and is much out of breath. He is followed by three men, who carry bundles of shields on their backs*).

CONAN: Well, here are the shields. I must tell you the order they have to be hung in; and you will want to know the deeds of all these boasters, that you may tell them to the horse boys and the scullions . . . but no, I have seen you before. Yes, now I remember, you have been in Tara fifty years and have hung them many a time. Come, the sooner we bring the Fianna, the sooner we shall eat. (*He turns to go out, coming back*). Well, there is good food on this table and all for the marriage of Finn and Grania. This boar was a fine beast, they fatten well on the acorns of Tara, and you have good big salmon in your river. Many a time I have had nothing but badger's flesh and otter's flesh when I have been in the woods with the Fianna, and the war about us. Give me a horn of ale. (*He is given a horn of ale but the horn is not a big one and he flings it away in disgust. He is given a larger one*). Ah, you have a good life of it here, but I am tired running the messages of the Fianna. Have I not legs to grow weary, and a body to sweat like another? I am hungry too, but I dare not put a knife in the meat till the Fianna are here.

NIALL: You are one of the Fianna and have just left them. You will be able to tell us when they will be here.

CONAN: I left them at the foot of the hill. A shepherd's wife followed Diarmuid and Diarmuid laughed at her. Goll took her part and Finn took Diarmuid's part for Finn and Diarmuid always stand together. Well, come, let us go hurry them. I will tell them about the boar's head and the salmon. Yes, you have fine salmon in Tara. (*They go out*).

BOY : The Fianna have a rough messenger.

NIALL : I would have none say that I have said it, but he is a man of little account among them.

BOY : Men wear sheep-skins in my country, but I had thought that the Fianna wore fine clothes.

NIALL : I will tell you why the Fianna made him wear it one of these days, and why Finn made him one of the Fianna. Would you be one of them ?

BOY : Yes, if I might be Finn, or Diarmuid, or Caoelte.

NIALL : They are famous for their battles ; they are great men, but would you not be Conan the Bald if you could ?

BOY : That man with the sheep skin ?

NIALL : Well, he eats when he is hungry, and sleeps when he is sleepy and rails at whomever displeases him. Those great men have the best seats at the table, and the fairest women for their bed-fellows, and yet I would not . . . *(He rushes across the stage to keep one of the men from hanging Goll's shield at the lower end of the table.)* Would you put Goll son of Morna's shield below Alvin's and Fergus's ; would you have the roof tree burnt over our heads ? It is the third shield from Finn's. Let me see now, let me think, it was Cool Finn's father who made this custom of the hanging up of every man's shield above his place. No quarreling, everything settled. I was going to tell you who made the Fianna, Boy ; it was Cool. He took a thousand men out of every kingdom, and made them into an army, and set them to watch the shores. No one is old enough except myself to remember those times. The men of Lochland and the men of Mona, and the men of Alba carrying off women here and sheep there, and leaving smoke and fire behind them, and nobody to meet them but men taken from the sheep-fold, and from the plough and from the smithy. Yes, that is where Caoelte's shield hangs. I told you its place last time and you remembered it. *(Returning to the Boy)*. But I was telling you how the Fianna saved the women and sheep. They fight well, but they are proud. Ah, they are very proud. I was telling you Boy, how they hanged the king's fool, and many and many a time they have made war on the king himself. Finn's father, Cool, died fighting against Cormac's father, Art the Melancholy, and it was for that death Finn kept out of the battle Cormac fought against the men of Mona. It has been this way always, and sometimes Eri has been like a shaking sod between them ; but this marriage mends all. *(Enter Grania and Laban)*.

BOY : There is old Laban and the King's daughter.

NIALL : Quick, quick put up the rest of the shields—Come away.

BOY : I have heard that there are women who live seven hundred years in the woods, spinning the threads of the long lived people of the woods, and then seven hundred years spinning for men. She is one of them. She has come back after these many years an old witch ; they say she has more shapes than one. *(Niall and the Boy go out, and are followed by other serving men)*.

GRANIA : You cannot persuade me. I will not marry Finn.

LABAN : Hush ! Hush !

GRANIA : But the Fianna are coming too ; you will tell me about them, about the young men. Yes, their shields are here already.

LABAN : Conan has brought them.

GRANIA : You have promised to tell me about the Fianna. If you will not, Niall will.

LABAN : You have been in the woods with Niall lately, and he has shown you where bees make their nests, and you have come home with honey-comb and flowers.

GRANIA : But it was you who taught me the magic there is in the herbs. You took me to a place where Earth breathes out of a cave.

LABAN : I am too old to go far now.

GRANIA : Mother, there are some that say you will never be older than you are. And now we will go over to the shields, because you will not refuse me anything I ask. Niall would not refuse me anything.

LABAN : Do not call him. Let nobody know what is in your mind.

GRANIA : (*Going to the table*). My father sits here, Finn son of Cool sits next to him, and here is my place next to Finn . . . but it will be empty.

LABAN : Hush ! No man matters to you now but Finn.

GRANIA : You told me his hair was grey. Grey hair and brown hair were the same to me a month ago. A month ago I was in the woods . . .

LABAN : It was spring time when the young find many things among the woods.

GRANIA : I had climbed a little path, and stood on the hill, where the trees grow sparer, looking into the mist.

LABAN : And it was then that you thought about a young man.

GRANIA : The mist was hanging on the brow of the hill, and something seemed to be moving over the world and to come out of the mist. It was beautiful, mother. The world was singing and the singing came into my breasts. But come to the shields and tell me of the men who are to sit under them.

LABAN : I dare not, I dare not.

GRANIA : But you said that to-night would not be my marriage night.

LABAN : No, no child I never said such a thing. Hush, lest they should hear you.

GRANIA : They who are wiser than you said it, Mother. The thread that you spun yesterday, the stars that we watched last night, the pebbles that we threw into the well this morning.

LABAN : Hush, your father will be here ; there is no time now. I saw you talking to King Cormac this morning, why did you not tell him of this change.

GRANIA : I took his hands in mine, and thought to tell him.

LABAN : You should have told him.

GRANIA : But he would have sent a messenger, and I should not have seen the Fianna together.

LABAN : So that you might pick a man who would carry you away. It will be long before men come to the end of this mischief. The Fianna shall be broken in two because of it. Oh, why did Cormac shut his ears to what I told him ? There will be flights and battles, ruin on ruin, and neither you nor I can do anything.

GRANIA : I would not be a trouble if I could help it. I would not set Finn against any man. I would have Finn and my man friends. I would stand between them. I would hand them their ale. Whose shield is that, mother ? That one with the red otter painted upon it.

LABAN : That shield with the red otter is the shield of Fergus. He is taller than all the others, his hair and his beard are brown, and he wears a crimson cloak over a white tunic.

GRANIA : Is he strong and stately ? Would he make my heart beat ?

LABAN : He is strong and stately, but there is grey in his beard. That red shield with the white deer's head painted upon it is the shield of Usheen. He has yellow hair, and he has long white hands, with fingers hard at the tips from plucking of harp strings, and they say that no woman has refused him her love.

GRANIA : Is he young ?

LABAN : There are younger than he. That grey shield with the raven painted upon it, is the shield of Goll, the son of Morna. He is a great hunter, and his arms and legs are as strong as the posts of a door.

GRANIA : Is there mirth in his eyes ?

LABAN : He has the quiet of the woods in his eyes. But I see your mind is not set upon one that is strong, but one that is young. That white shield with the green fish is the shield of Caoelte. They call him Caoelte the Swift-Footed, and he is young and a teller of battle tales. But that silver shield with the flying white heron upon it is the shield of Diarmuid. He is the youngest and comeliest of all. He has brown hair and blue eyes, and light limbs, and his skin is white but for freckles. He is courteous and he is merry with women. It is said of him that he will not be remembered for deeds of arms but as a true lover, and that he will die young.

GRANIA : Diarmuid, Diarmuid, a pleasant sounding name . . . Diarmuid a sweet sounding name.

LABAN : But, child, how think you that these things will come about ?

GRANIA : I believe in your soothsaying, Mother, that a man as young as I am will come and carry me away.

LABAN : No, no, Diarmuid will not break his oath to Finn. Diarmuid has saved Finn's life three times and Finn has saved Diarmuid's life once. They always stand together,

GRANIA : You said his hair was brown, and his eyes blue, and his limbs light, and his skin white but for freckles. It was for such a man that I looked into the mist. But thinking of love makes the brain giddy.

LABAN : What can he do ? He cannot overthrow Finn and his army.

GRANIA : (*Waking from a reverie*). You must find a way, Mother, it is for you to find a way.

LABAN : They would hang me from the rafters, child, they would hang me.

GRANIA : You would baffle them : it would not be difficult for you. But how shall I escape from Finn's marriage bed ? Shall I run into the woods ?

LABAN : The woods are full of wolves.

GRANIA : I do not fear the wolves.

LABAN : They would follow you. You could not escape them. They would tear you to pieces.

GRANIA : If you would not have me go into the woods, find a way of escape.

LABAN : Why will you not marry Finn ? You would be the greatest woman in Eri.

GRANIA : I will not marry Finn ; and you, mother, who has taken care of me since you could carry me in your arms, you would not have me run alone into the woods.

LABAN : The woods are lonely, Grania, you must not go.

LABAN : Hush ! (*Taking her aside*). Child, love has made you wise as the bird in the wood that seeks a mate. There is a way, listen ! The greatest among the Fianna sit at table with Cormac and Finn ; and Niall and another serving man will wait upon them . . . But do you say that you will pour out their ale for them, and let them not deny you this. You must say that there could be no denying you anything on your marriage night. Then come to me and I will find a way. Then I will bewitch the ale, and I will put a pale dust into it, and will make a spell over it. (*Enter Cormac with two Councillors*). Hush, here is your father. (*Laban sits down and begins to spin*).

CORMAC : This is the wisest marriage, though I might have made a greater one. I might have married her to the King of Alba, but this marriage will keep our kingdom safe. (*He turns and sees Grania*). My dear daughter, I have been looking for you. Let us sit together and talk to one another. To-night you go away from me, but you go with the chief man in Eri. (*The Councillors withdraw*). Come, dear daughter, let us sit together. Why do you stand with fixed eyes, and I see you have not an ornament upon you.

GRANIA : I have forgotten them.

CORMAC : I should have wished to have seen you in your bracelets and your clasp with the emeralds. Will you wear them ?

GRANIA : I can send for them and wear them for you, but I am not minded to wear them.

CORMAC : Why are you not minded to wear them ? (*Pause*). What has Laban told you ? She was telling you something when I came in,

GRANIA : Father you have often seen me wear my bracelets, and my clasp, and can love me without them, as can any other man. Father, listen, let us sit together, or let us talk as we walk hither and thither. I am going from this house where my mother lived and where I have always lived, with one you call the chief man in Eri, but whom I have never seen, so I have been questioning her spindle, and you know all that she finds in her spindle is true.

CORMAC : And she has told you ?

GRANIA : Only that I am going away into the woods.

CORMAC : You are troubled, my daughter, a woman is always troubled when her marriage is at hand. Maybe you think Finn too rough a man to marry—I might have married you to the King of Alba who is a man of peace : he sent messengers, but Finn is more worthy to be your husband.

GRANIA : I have not seen Finn.

CORMAC : The enemies of Eri have seen him ; you know how he has held its borders against them. Finn and his Fianna have made Eri great, as when the Red Branch was at Emain Macha.

GRANIA : You wish me to marry as kings and queens marry, but I . . .

CORMAC : (*Suspiciously*). You have set your heart upon some boy.

GRANIA : The Fianna are coming. I shall wed this night him who is the chief man among them in my eyes.

CORMAC : That is well, Finn is the chief man of Eri after the high king. (*A sound of trumpets outside. The Councillors of Cormac and the servants enter. The servants open the door. Niall stands by the door.*)

NIALL : Way for Finn and his Council. (*Enter Finn, Usheen, Caoelte, Diarmuid etc.*).

CORMAC : Finn is welcome to my house.

FINN : As the marriage law is, I declare the bride price upon the threshold. I give my word to guard this kingdom against all cattle spoilers, that are of the kingdom of Eri, and to guard it before my own country from the men of Lochland and the men of Mona ; and I give my word to overthrow all kings of Eri that raise their hand against the high king. I cannot give a king's gift for the Fianna have neither sheep nor cattle, nor towns nor villages, nor great store of silver and gold.

CORMAC : The bride price is worthy of Finn and of my daughter. (*Cormac takes Finn across the stage and presents him to Grania*).

DIARMUID : (*At the door*). And this is Grania.

USHEEN : Do not look at her, Diarmuid, king's daughters are not for us.

NIALL : (*In a loud voice*). Let the hot meats be brought in, way for the heads of the four troops of the Fianna . . . (*Enter a number of men, they stand about the door, Cormac leaves Finn and Grania and goes towards the door to welcome the Fianna*).

GRANIA : There is a scar upon your cheek. That is the scar made by the sword of Forgael, when you overthrew the men of Aidne.

FINN : Has the tale of that battle come so far ?

GRANIA : I have listened all my life to tales of your battles. (*Taking his hand in both her hands*). This hand has overthrown many kings.

FINN : Grania must not praise me if she would not take my luck away.

GRANIA : Some day you will tell me about your battles. (*She turns away as if already weary of him*).

FINN : Are my battles more to you than my love ? (*Cormac brings Caoelte, Usheen and Diarmuid towards Grania—Cormac and Finn go up the stage*).

GRANIA : Ah, this is Usheen, I knew him by his harp of red yew. Will you sing us love songs to-night ?

CAOELTE : I am Caoelte, and this is Diarmuid.

GRANIA : Welcome Caoelte, teller of battle tales. There is a tale you tell . . . (*She stands looking at Diarmuid, forgetful of everything*). And this is Diarmuid. Has Diarmuid nothing to say to me ?

DIARMUID : What should I say to you. I see you on your wedding night, Grania.

GRANIA : The wedding feast is spread and I shall be wedded and bedded before dawn if someone does not carry me away.

DIARMUID : If someone does not carry you away !

GRANIA : I know your shield Diarmuid. It has a flying white heron upon it, and this is your sword. (*He gives her his sword and they stand looking at each other*).

USHEEN : Diarmuid ! (*Grania gives back Diarmuid's sword*).

NIALL : The King and Finn son of Cool are seated, the guests at this table are Usheen, Caoelte, Goll son of Morna, Diarmuid, Fergus, Fathna. The tables for the rest of the Fianna are spread beyond the arras of the western hall. (*The Fianna and serving men withdraw leaving Niall and one serving man to wait at the king's table*).

CORMAC : My daughter, why do you not take your place beside Finn son of Cool ?

GRANIA : Every night, father, I have poured out your ale, I would do so this the last time, and this night pour out my husband's for the first time.

CORMAC : Grania must not pour out our ale.

FINN : But if this be her wish ?

GRANIA : It is the first favour I have asked.

FINN : All here will remember this as an honour. (*The King signs to the serving men to withdraw, Grania returns to Laban*).

GRANIA : Has this been done well ? Give me the ale.

LABAN : Here are two flagons that I have made sleepy . . . but no, I will make a spell over them.

Do all that I bid you
Pour sleep in the ale horns
That all that have drunk them
May sleep as on pillows
Till cock crow at morning.

Give them this ale and they will sleep till cockcrow. Give it to all but Caoelte and Usheen and Diarmuid. (*Laban goes out. Grania passes along the table filling the cups and horns. Caoelte and Usheen are the last who should be served. When she comes to Diarmuid she stands looking at him.*)

CORMAC : Why do you not fill Diarmuid's cup ? (*Grania drops the flagon.*)

GRANIA : The ale is all spilled ; I will bring another flagon.

CORMAC : Daughter, I do not like the spilling of ale at a marriage feast.

CONAN : It never happens but it brings ill luck.

DIARMUID : Conan sees ill luck everywhere. When will Finn take away his favour from Conan, and let the Fianna give him his deserts ?

FINN : Tell us a story Caoelte, and put the spilling of the ale out of our minds. (*Caoelte rises from his place, and takes his harp. He stands touching his harp as if uncertain what story he is going to tell.*) Tell us the story of the house of the quicken trees.

CAOELTE : Yes, I will tell you the story of the house of the quicken trees. (*A pause.*) It is gone, it went out of my mind of a sudden. A new story is coming to me . . . it is coming to me . . . I see a man lying dead and his wife going away with another.

FINN : What quarrel have you with me Caoelte, that you tell such a story at my marriage ?

CAOELTE : There is fear on me, Finn, for I saw beyond the world suddenly and clearly.

USHEEN : Let us hear the story of the quicken trees. Tell it to us, Caoelte. Or shall we ask Goll to tell it to us ? (*He tries to rouse Goll.*) Goll is sleepy.

CONAN : You have no need to tell your stories to make men sleepy. The names of them are enough.

FINN : Let us drink and forget our thoughts of ill luck.

CONAN : The Fianna have had their share of good luck. To-day the ale has been spilt, and a strange tale put into Caoelte's mind.

DIARMUID : I am weary of Conan's bitter tongue, Finn. I would beat him from the table.

FINN : It would be worst of all for blows to be struck at my marriage feast. Conan and Diarmuid, I will have peace.

CORMAC : (*Trying to rouse himself.*) Let Conan tell his story or let Usheen tell us a story ; I am growing sleepy.

USHEEN : I cannot remember any story—I too have had my thoughts taken away.

CONAN : Diarmuid, Caoelte, and Usheen have forgotten their boasting stories, but Conan has many a pleasant story and no one asks him for one. I will tell a pleasant story. I will tell of the death of Diarmuid.

FINN : I will have no tale of death at my marriage feast. To speak of Diarmuid's death may be to bring death upon him. Be silent or you may take his luck away.

GRANIA : (*Coming nearer to the table*). Will Diarmuid die by sword or will he be made captive ?

FINN : I forbid this story.

DIARMUID : The story of my death is an old story, and it no longer makes me afeared. Tell on.

CONAN : (*Obsequiously. Coming from the table*). Oh, my beautiful Grania, this is the way it was. Diarmuid was put out to foster with a shepherd, and no one was so beautiful as Diarmuid when he was a child, except the shepherd's son. The shepherd's son was much more beautiful than Diarmuid and his beauty made Diarmuid's father jealous and one day he crushed the shepherd's son to death between his knees.

GRANIA : Tell me of Diarmuid, tell me of Diarmuid.

CONAN : The shepherd wept and wept. Oh, how he wept. And after a while he took his second son into the woods, and made a spell over him with a Druid hazel stick, and changed him into a black and bristless boar. And some day that boar is to break out of the woods and to kill many men and many women. All the Fianna are to gather for the hunting of him ; they are to hunt him round Eri and through Eri and from kingdom to kingdom. Oh what a hunting, oh, what a hunting !

GRANIA : Tell me more of Diarmuid. Tell me quickly.

CONAN : I must drink again, I am thirsty again. (*He drinks*). Diarmuid must go out against that boar and must be killed. It was to kill him that the shepherd made the spell over his second son. He shall be torn by the tusks, and his face shall be foul, because it will be bloody. I would that the women of Eri could see him when he is foul and bloody. (*He staggers*). I am growing sleepy, because I have to run the messages of the Fianna . . . (*He recovers himself*). I shall live to see him when the tusks have torn him, for it has been foretold of him also that he shall not live long. He shall not be remembered for the deeds of arms but as a lover of women. He shall live as a lover of women, and his life will soon be over. Who has put witchcraft in my ale ? Who among the Fianna has done this ? (*He falls*).

USHEEN : He said there was witchcraft in the ale, and look, they are all sleeping. Who was it that put witchcraft into the ale, Grania ?

GRANIA : Laban, the Druidess has done this for me. I had never a mind to marry Finn. But why does not Diarmuid come to us ? (*Diarmuid comes from the table*). It was for you that I ordered witchcraft to be put into the ale.

DIARMUID : For me, Grania ?

GRANIA : I had never a mind to marry Finn. I am going away with you to-night, we shall be far away before they awake.

DIARMUID : You and I, and you did not see me before this night !

GRANIA : I desired you and you were in my thoughts before I saw you, Diarmuid. You were in my thoughts, Diarmuid. (*She takes him in her arms*).

DIARMUID : I too desired you and you were in my thoughts—oh beautiful woman ! You were in my thoughts, Grania. Let me look at you. Let me put back your hair. Your eyes are grey, Grania, your eyes are grey and your hands . . . But Finn, but Finn . . . Grania wife of Finn, why have you played with me ?

GRANIA : I am not the wife of Finn (*She goes towards Diarmuid*). And now I cannot be Finn's wife for you have held me in your arms and you have kissed me.

DIARMUID : What is this madness, Grania ? Here, here this night and Finn sleeping there.

GRANIA : If he had loved me, his love would have been stronger than witchcraft. (*A pause*). But why do you go away ? Is not my hair soft, are not my cheeks red, is not my body shapely ? You held my hair in your hands but now, and your lips were on my cheek and lips. Were not my lips soft ? You see that he shrinks from me. It may be that no man will take me because he wants me, but only because I am a king's daughter. Would you shrink from me Caoelte, if it were you I had asked to go away with me. Would you Usheen ?

CAOELTE : Look, Grania, at the sleeping man whose ale you have bewitched.

USHEEN : If Finn were to wake, he would take some terrible vengeance for this.

GRANIA : What is his vengeance to me now ? I will go into the woods and will wander alone there till I die.

FINN : (*In his sleep*). Diarmuid ! Diarmuid !

DIARMUID : When I looked into your eyes, Grania, it was as though I had come out of a cave into the dawn. But I cannot, I cannot, we have sworn an oath to Finn. We swore it upon the rock where the earth screamed under Con son of Filmy. If the oath were broken the earth would send famine, the corn would wither, the Fianna would be divided, an enemy would come.

USHEEN : Take down your shield and begone from her Diarmuid.

GRANIA : He looks at me because it has been foretold.

DIARMUID : (*Disengaging himself from Usheen and Caoelte*). What has been foretold ? Who has foretold it ?

USHEEN : (*Putting his hand on Diarmuid's shoulder*). Diarmuid !

CAOELTE : You will be the first of the Fianna to break his oath.

DIARMUID : The fortune teller has lied, if she has said that I will break my oath to Finn. What did she tell you ? What has she said ? Has she said this ?

GRANIA : She spoke of a woman pledged to marry a man whom she did not love, and of a man who would come and take her away from that marriage bed. She foretold that the man would leave all things and that the woman would leave all things for love's sake. She foretold that they would go away in the middle of the marriage feast, and wander in the unpeopled woods, and be happy by the rushy margin of many streams.

DIARMUID : And the man is I, and the woman is you.

GRANIA : She foretold that it shall seem as if all men had forgotten them, but the wild creatures shall not fly from them. They shall be happy under green boughs and become wise in all woodland wisdom, and as she spoke I too seemed to see them wandering on paths untrodden by the feet of the deer, where there are sudden odours of wild honey, and where they will often throw their arms about one another and kiss one another on the mouth. (*She goes nearer to him*). And she told me, Diarmuid, that we should make our beds with the skins of deer under cromlechs and in caves, and awake from sleep we know not why, as though the dwarfs in the rocks had called to us, that we might see the starlight falling through the leaves. She told me the dwarfs of the rocks and the secret people of the trees should watch over us, and though all the men of Eri were our enemies they should not pluck us out of one another's arms.

DIARMUID : I must not listen or I will take her in my arms. I will awake Finn—Finn, Finn awake !

GRANIA : What would you tell him ?

DIARMUID : That the world vanishes, that I see nothing but you.

GRANIA : Is it not said that Diarmuid never refused help to a woman, and who is more helpless than I ?

DIARMUID : Had you not told me that you loved me, I would have helped you.

GRANIA : Help me, Diarmuid.

DIARMUID : Caoelte and Usheen have seen my trouble ; they will tell Finn of my trouble. She has asked me for help and I must give it.

GRANIA : (*Standing at the door which she has thrown open*). Come, Diarmuid, to the woods, the birds of Aognhus, the birds of love, the birds that the eye cannot see, sing joyously, sing fiercely, they clap their wings and sing.

DIARMUID : She asks for my help and I must give it.

USHEEN : From this night the Fianna are broken in two.

CAOELTE : And the kingdom that was to be made safe is in danger, and Diarmuid's oath is broken.

DIARMUID : My oath is not broken, tell Finn that. Tell him that this sword shall guard her by day, and will lie between us at night. Tell him I will send some messenger, some token that shall say to him—Finn, I bring you word that so many hours or so many moons have passed by and that Diarmuid's oath is unbroken.

GRANIA : The woods are sad with their summer sadness, and the birds of love have become silent, but they are not sleeping, their eyes are bright among the boughs . . . (*She goes out*).

DIARMUID : I must follow her. Upon whose face shall I after this look in friendship again ? (*He takes his shield from the wall and goes out*).

USHEEN : (*Goes to the door and looks after them*). They have gone westward to the woods.

CAOELTE : When Finn wakes, we must tell him that they have gone eastward towards the sea.

(End Act I).

ACT II.

Diarmuid's house. A spinning wheel to left. Walls made of roughly hewed timber. Laban sitting before the spinning wheel. Cormac sitting near her. The twilight is slowly deepening. Enter Diarmuid and a shepherd carrying fleeces.

DIARMUID : We have not yet finished our shearing. There are a few more sheep and we shall be done. (*Diarmuid and shepherd go out*).

CORMAC : Every kind of sorrow has come upon this land : the Fianna are divided, and the galleys of our enemies are drawn up upon the shore. Our kingdom will be over-run by the Lochlanders and the hunting of Diarmuid and Grania will begin again.

LABAN : Have your long talks with Diarmuid come to no better end than that ?

CORMAC : I talked with Diarmuid late into the night and I could not persuade him. Old woman who has spoken nothing but lies, I told him that the kingdom I had given him would be taken from him, and that I could not save him from Finn, or Eri from the invader.

LABAN : I heard your voices, but I did not hear Grania's voice.

CORMAC : He said " Tell Finn to begone from my valley, let the sod be blown into flame again and the pursuit of Diarmuid and Grania begin again."

LABAN : And Grania stood by the door post watching the moon shining down the valley, looking to where Diarmuid's cattle were feeding and towards the encampment of Finn.

CORMAC : Yes, she stood there saying nothing. I turned to her often, saying, " If I take this message to Finn, you will have to fly into the woods again."

LABAN : And she answered nothing ?

CORMAC : Only this : " Where will Laban go if we are driven from this valley ?" She said, " Father, you brought her here to be near me and if we are driven into the woods you will see that no harm comes to her." But remember how near the Fianna were to hanging you from a rafter that night at Tara, and if I bring Diarmuid's message to Finn I may not know how to save you from them.

LABAN : They did not dare. The rope fell out of Goll's hand ; and Conan told them they could not hang me but with a rope that I had spun, and they tried to make me spin one.

CORMAC : Yes, yes, but Finn has waited for three days. (*Going to the door*). This sunset ends the third day. The horses are waiting and Niall is at their heads. Speak if you have found any meaning in the thread.

LABAN : The thread keeps breaking as it runs from the distaff.

CORMAC : Then the end of somebody is near ; the end of Diarmuid or of Grania or of Finn . . . or the end of Eri. You must tell me before I go for I cannot wait any longer.

LABAN : The thread is breaking ; I cannot find a whole thread in the flax.

CORMAC : You have lied to me, old woman. You brought me this long way that you might be near Grania. (*She gets up from the wheel, Cormac puts her back again*). But spin since there is flax in the distaff, the earth knows all things and the flax comes out of the earth.

LABAN : What would you know ? If there be forgiveness in Finn's heart ?

CORMAC : The men of Lochland have dragged up 70 galleys on to the beach of Rury.

LABAN : You are troubled, being afraid that Caoelte and Usheen may not fight against the men of Lochland because they are angry with Finn. You are afraid that Finn may begin the hunting of Diarmuid and Grania again ? You are afraid that Diarmuid and Grania . . .

CORMAC : Old woman full of wisdom about everything but the danger that waits us, I have to carry Diarmuid's answer to Finn and I would know what will happen to Diarmuid and to my daughter. You sit silent. Will you answer me ? (*A long pause, the King walks up the stage slowly and when he turns Laban rises from the wheel*).

LABAN : I see Diarmuid standing by Finn with his hand on Finn's shoulder.

CORMAC : Then they are friends.

LABAN : I see Diarmuid drawing his sword.

CORMAC : Against whom, Laban ? And then . . .

LABAN : I can see Finn drawing his dagger.

CORMAC : His dagger—his sword—look again.

LABAN : It is a dagger that I see.

CORMAC : Now wind the thread tightly round the forefinger. Now hold the thread tightly and look, for the earth knows all and her knowledge is in the flax.

LABAN : The vision has passed from me, I see nothing else.

CORMAC : Spin again, spin another thread.

LABAN : I cannot see more than once, and the thread is broken again, you have broken it.

CORMAC : Then is ill luck in my hands. If the thread had not broken we should know all. You say you saw Finn pull out his dagger, but was not Diarmuid standing by his side with his hand on Finn's shoulder ? What is the meaning of this ? If you do not tell me I will have you beaten and your wheel thrown into the lake. (*Enter Grania*).

GRANIA : Ah, my father she can tell you nothing if you speak so loud.

CORMAC : She has told me strange things, things without meaning.

GRANIA : You never believe her words, father, when she speaks them,

but afterwards you find out that she had spoken truly.

CORMAC : True or false it matters not since they do not help me. Where is Diarmuid ? Does he speak to-day as he spoke last night ?

GRANIA : He has said nothing to me. But a day and night have gone since you have spoken to him. His mind may have changed. (*Going up the stage*). This is the hour when the flock comes home. Diarmuid is thinking of the folding of his sheep. You will find him with the shepherd. Or shall I send Laban to bring him ? (*Laban gets up and goes out*). The fold is not far from the house, it was brought nearer for the wolves carried off three of our sheep last week . . . Ah, I see him coming up the path, Laban is going to meet him. (*Grania comes down the stage to Cormac*). But, dear father, three days are not a long while to see you in, after seven years. You will come here again and forget the troubles that kingdom brings. You are lonely at Tara. I used to sing for you. Shall I come to Tara and sing for you again ?

CORMAC : But Diarmuid and Finn—you cannot come to Tara until they have made peace. I have persuaded Finn to make peace and I have brought him here . . . But we go on saying this one thing again and again.

GRANIA : How will it all end ? What a broil it has been since that night at Tara.

CORMAC : Never did men sleep as we slept that night over our ale. We sat at that table like stones till the cock crew. We woke together at the crowing of the cock, and Finn cried out, "Grania has been taken from me."

GRANIA : I thought that Finn did not love me, that you made the marriage that you might be stronger than any other king or than any invader.

CORMAC : Ah, Grania, you have your mother's eyes. Your mother was very beautiful, Grania.

GRANIA : I thought nothing but this : that a man should love me among the woods, far among the woods.

CORMAC : And Diarmuid has loved this fair face very dearly.

GRANIA : But in this valley love has become terrible and we are sometimes afraid of one another. And now I would have Diarmuid arm the shepherds and lead them against the Lochlanders and drive them into their galleys.

CORMAC : If you think like this, why did you stand looking down the valley and saying nothing ? Diarmuid asked you, and I asked you.

GRANIA : If I had said "yes" to you, I should have said "no" to Diarmuid. I would say nothing but leave things to work out, whatever will may be in them. (*Enter Niall and the King's councillors. Councillors stand in the background. Niall advances*).

CORMAC : Yes, Niall, I have delayed too long.

GRANIA : (*Going to Niall*). You are going now, Niall, and I have had little time to speak with you, and I would have spoken to you about the days at Tara, when you were my only playfellow. How well I remember going with you, one spring morning to a little pool at the edge of the wood. We sat on the high bank fishing for roach. Have you forgotten ?

NIALL : No, Princess, I have not forgotten. That same day I showed you a blackbird sitting on her nest. You had never seen a bird sitting on her nest before. But how many things have happened since then : you know the woodland now better than I.

GRANIA : Shall I ever see Tara again ? I have wandered a long way.

CORMAC : Five days' journey from here, Grania. We must hurry, neither Niall nor I can keep the saddle for many hours at a time : Diarmuid's cattle are coming this way and their sides are heavy with the rich grass of the valley which I have given you, and the rooks are flying home. (*Enter Diarmuid*).

CORMAC : I shall be with Finn in half an hour and I would not say to him the words you bade me say last night. Do not send me to the man you wronged with the words you spoke last night.

DIARMUID : Tell him to be gone out of my valley.

CORMAC : Then farewell, dear daughter.

GRANIA : Father stay with us, Diarmuid do you not hear ? Do you not understand ?

CORMAC : Diarmuid knows how great Finn's anger will be when I bring him this answer.

DIARMUID : I have fought Finn and overthrown him. Did I not break out of the house with the seven doors when he had set a watch at all doors ? I went out of the door where he himself held the watch and my sword struck the sword out of his hand.

CORMAC : If you will send me with this answer, so be it. I can say no more. Farewell to all here. (*Exeunt Cormac, Niall and Councillors*).

DIARMUID : We thought we should weary of the silence of this valley but it is of their voices that we weary. Why should we listen to anything except one another. But they are gone at last, and care is gone with them, and we are alone again with ourselves and our flocks and herds. Come to the door Grania and see my black bull in the meadow. (*Coming down the stage to her*). Do you not believe that care is gone with them ?

GRANIA : You saw my father's face as he went out. His look has put a deep care into my heart.

DIARMUID : These northern raiders will not dare to move from their galleys. They will soon sail away, and should we give up our happiness because we fear they may carry off a few score of cattle ?

GRANIA : Let it be as you wish it, Diarmuid.

DIARMUID : But oath upon oath is broken. I broke my oath to Finn, and now I break the oath which binds me to take up arms against all invaders. Grania, you would like to see Tara again. You would like to see Finn again.

GRANIA : I gave up Tara for your sake, Diarmuid, and that was easier than to live in this valley.

DIARMUID : Ah, you are weary of this valley. But Finn and I are divided, Grania, as by the sea, and if the peace your father has made between us is not to be broken, Finn must leave my valley. It is for your sake, Grania, that he would have me among his Fianna again.

GRANIA : He has not seen me for seven years.

DIARMUID : To see you once is enough, Grania.

GRANIA : I think that it is for Eri's sake he would have you among the Fianna again. He does not think of women. Why should a woman think of him ? Have I not loved you for seven years, Diarmuid ? And my father has told you that Finn is bound by an oath and that he has said, " Diarmuid has his love ; let him keep her."

DIARMUID : He will not break his oath, but he will find some way out of it. There is always treachery behind his peacemaking.

GRANIA : He made peace with Goll and that peace is still unbroken. Yet it was Goll's father who plundered Finn's country and murdered his people.

DIARMUID : Goll does Finn's bidding although he might be chief man himself. But Finn has not forgiven. Usheen saw a look in his eyes at Tara.

GRANIA : Ah, how well you remember. That was seven years ago.

DIARMUID : And when I am dead it will be Goll's turn.

GRANIA : Unhappy brooding man, you will neither believe in Finn's oath nor in my love.

DIARMUID : Here we have everything we sought for. But in return for this kingdom your father would have me among the Fianna again. I thought we should live and die here, I thought our children would grow up about us here, if the gods accept my offering and give us children. (*He goes up the stage*). Come, look at the sleepy evening. These evenings are better than the evenings of battle long ago, and were I among my old companions again, Usheen, Goll, Caoelte, I should look back upon these quiet evenings when the flock came home and you gave me my supper in the dusk. (*Comes down the stage*). If I were to die, Grania, would you be Finn's wife ?

GRANIA : How did such a thought come into your mind ?

DIARMUID : My life began with you and it ends with you. Oh, that these breasts should belong to another, and the usage of this body. Life of my life, I new you before I was born, I made a bargain with this brown hair before the beginning of time and it shall not be broken through unending time. And yet I shall sit alone upon that shore that is beyond the world—though all the gods are there, the shore shall be empty because one is not there, and I shall weep remembering how we wandered among the woods. But you say nothing Grania. You are weary of the shadows of these mountains and of the smell of the fold. It is many days since you came to my bed and it is many weeks since I have seen an ornament upon you. Your love is slipping from me, it slips away like the water in the brook. You do not answer. These silences make me afraid.

GRANIA : Then, Diarmuid, go to your old companions.

DIARMUID : My old companions ? What shall I say to them ?

GRANIA : You will fight shoulder to shoulder with Finn and Caoelte. You will listen to Usheen's harp playing, and I shall love you better when you come to me with the reek of battle upon you.

DIARMUID : We shall be again what we were to one another. You are not that Grania I wandered with among the woods.

GRANIA : You are no longer that Diarmuid who overthrew Finn at the house of the seven doors.

DIARMUID : You speak the truth, Grania. I should have gone to the Fianna. Now it is too late.

GRANIA : Cormac cannot have reached the ford, you will overtake him. *(She goes to her chest and takes out an ornament).*

DIARMUID : Who is the shepherd, Grania ? I have never seen him before. Where has he come from ?

GRANIA : What shepherd do you speak of ?

DIARMUID : There, there in the doorway.

GRANIA : There is nobody there.

DIARMUID : He beckons me—I must follow—*(He goes towards the door).* I see him no longer. A mist must have come in my eyes. I see clearer now and there is no one. But I must follow.

GRANIA : Whom would you follow ?

DIARMUID : I see no one now and yet there was a sudden darkening of the light and a shepherd carrying a hazel stick came into the doorway and beckoned me.

GRANIA : No, Diarmuid, nobody has come into that doorway.

DIARMUID : Nobody came for you, but one came for me. Let me go, Grania.

GRANIA : No, no, it is a warning that you must not go.

DIARMUID : That is not how I understand the warning. I am bidden to leave this valley. He beckoned me. I am bidden to the Fianna. *(They go out. Enter Laban, who sits down at her wheel and begins to spin. Grania enters shortly after, she stands by the door looking after Diarmuid).*

GRANIA : He is like one whose mind is shaken. His thoughts are far away and I do not know what they are.

LABAN : He is brooding over that story Conan told him at Tara—it has been in his mind all day.

GRANIA : And before he left me he saw a shepherd where there was nobody.

LABAN : A shepherd with a Druid hazel stick.

GRANIA : It is better that he should live among his old companions. He talks one moment of Finn's crookedness ; and at another of my love as if it were waning . . . In a few minutes, Diarmuid and Finn will meet.

LABAN : In a few minutes, Finn will stand with his hand on Diarmuid's shoulder.

GRANIA : Then I have done well in sending him to Finn. I did it for Diarmuid's sake, and for my father's sake and for the sake of my father's kingdom. I chose Diarmuid because he was young and comely, but oh, how can I forget the greatness of Finn. He has gone to bring Finn to me. In a few minutes Finn and his Fianna will stand under this roof.

LABAN : That is true, my daughter, sit beside me here and tell me what happened to you when you left Tara.

GRANIA : When we left Tara we came to a little glade on the hillside and we heard there a sudden and a beautiful singing of birds, and we saw a red fox creeping in the grass.

LABAN : And then ?

GRANIA : And then we saw a young man sitting in the long grass.

LABAN : What did he say ?

GRANIA : He was but a herdsman's son seeking a master and so Diarmuid took him into his service, and yet, Mother, I think that he was greater than Diarmuid or I, for he gave us much good service, and so much good counsel. He never put us in a cave that had not two mouths, or let us take refuge in an island that had not two harbours, nor eat our food where we had cooked it, nor sleep where we had eaten it. He never let us lie for many hours in one place, and he often changed our sleeping places in the middle of the night.

LABAN : What name did he bid you call him ?

GRANIA : He bid us call him, Mudham. But I think he had some great and beautiful name did we but know it. Have you ever seen him, Mother ?

LABAN : It is said that none who have seen him have been long content with any mortal lover.

GRANIA : I have been content with Diarmuid nigh on seven years.

LABAN : Did you ever hear that beautiful singing of birds again ?

GRANIA : Yes, I heard them sing by the banks of a river ; I heard them when Diarmuid broke his oath to Finn. We had wandered by the banks of a river nine days, and Mudham fished for us, and every day we hung an uncooked salmon, on a tree as a token to Finn. On the tenth day we hung a cooked salmon, for on the ninth night a sword had not lain between us—but Mother, I can tell you no more. I would have you tell me, you who know all things, what is passing in the valley. Have Finn and Diarmuid made friends ? Has Diarmuid passed the fires of the Fianna without speaking ?

LABAN : They have spoken, and they are on their way hither, so forget them for a while, and tell me if you are happy in this valley.

GRANIA : I stand by the door of this house, seeing the hours wane, waiting for Diarmuid to come home from his hunting. Nothing has happened until to-day, and now Diarmuid and Finn are walking up the valley together, reconciled at last. I had come to think I should never look on a stirring day again, and I had thought to send all the thread you would spin

to be woven into a grass green web on which to embroider my wanderings with Diarmuid among the woods. I should have been many years embroidering it, but when it was done and hung round this room, I should have seen birds, beasts, and leaves which ever way I turned, and Diarmuid and myself wandering among them.

LABAN: But now you have thrown the doors wide open and the days are streaming in upon you again.

GRANIA: Yes, yes, have I done rightly? Had I not sent Diarmuid to Finn, the broil would have begun again . . . I must put on my jewels. The Fianna will be here in a moment, and Finn has never seen me in my jewels. Spin for me, Mother, spin for me; tell me I have done rightly. But no, they are coming I can hear their footsteps. Go to the serving men and bid them take the drinking horns and the flagons from the cupboard. (*Exit Laban. Grania stands before a long brazen mirror that hangs upon the wall, and puts the gold circlet about her head and the heavy bracelets upon her arm, and the great many-coloured cloak upon her which she fastens with an emerald clasp. She puts a gold girdle about her waist. Enter Cormac, Finn, Caoelte, Diarmuid and others of the Fianna. Diarmuid is talking to Finn. Enter servants with flagons of ale, drinking horns and torches.* Welcome Usheen, welcome Caoelte, welcome Goll and all the noble Fianna into my house. I am happy that such men shall stand under my roof. The shepherds of Ben Bulben will tell each other many years after we are dead that Finn, Usheen, Caoelte, and Goll stood under this roof. (*Grania goes to her father and leads him to a high seat*). You cannot go from us now, for I am too glad for leave taking.

CORMAC: I will stay a little while, and will drink a horn of ale with this noble company who will defend Eri against the men of Lochland.

DIARMUID: We have been here but three moons and have not had time to build a house great enough for ourselves and for our people. This winter we shall build a house of oak wood great enough for two hundred people to sleep under its pillars. All the Fianna who come shall sleep under our roof.

GRANIA: When you speak of their coming, you make us think of their leave-taking, and I would forget that they shall ever leave us.

CORMAC: Eri is safe now that her great men are united.

CAOELTE: For a long while when we lighted our fires at night, there was no fire at which some did not side with Finn, some with Diarmuid. But at last those that were of Finn's party and those that were of Diarmuid's party gathered about different fires. And this year the fires were lighted far apart.

USHEEN: And time wore on until one day the swords were out and the earth red underfoot.

FINN: If all Eri were red under foot, it was but Grania's due that men in coming times might know of the love she had put into men's hearts. (*He puts his hand on Diarmuid's shoulder. Two serving men go round with ale. Grania stops them and takes the flagons from them.*)

GRANIA : It is right that I should serve the ale on such a day as this.

CORMAC : My daughter must not pour out the ale.

USHEEN : If Grania pours out the ale we shall sleep sound to-night.

CORMAC : You have spoken folly, Usheen . . . I, I spoke out of a dream.

GRANIA, since you have taken the flagons from your serving men, serve us. But I would you had not done this. (*Grania goes round filling each one's horn with ale. Diarmuid and Finn are still standing together on the right. She pauses, considering for an instant, and then fills Finn's horn.*)

CAOELTE : Diarmuid, we have not spoken to you nor seen you these seven years.

GOLL : Have you no word for us ?

USHEEN : We would drink with you. (*Diarmuid goes up the stage and joins the group who are standing half way up the stage, near to where the King is sitting.*)

GRANIA : In this ale you will not drink sleep, but you will drink forgetfulness of me, and friendship for Diarmuid.

FINN : Had I known that you would speak like this I would not have come to your house.

GRANIA : But you have come here for this.

USHEEN : It is not enough for Finn and Diarmuid to drink together ; they must be bound together by the blood bond. They must be made brothers before the gods. They must be bound together.

CAOELTE : Yes, yes, one of you there by the door—you Finmole—cut a sod of grass with your sword. They must be bound together.

DIARMUID : (*As he comes down the stage, he draws his sword.*) Finn, draw blood out of your hand as I draw blood out of mine. (*Finn pricks his hand with his dagger and goes towards Diarmuid and lets blood from his hand drop into Diarmuid's cup. Diarmuid lets the blood from his hand drop into the cup also. He gives the cup to Finn.*) Speak the holy words, Finn.

FINN : (*Having drunk out of the cup.*)

This bond has bound us
Like son to father
Let him who breaks it
Be driven from the thresholds
Of God-kind and man-kind.

(*Diarmuid takes the cup and drinks.*)

DIARMUID : Let the sea bear witness,
Let the wind bear witness,
Let the earth bear witness,
Let the fire bear witness,
Let the dew bear witness,
Let the stars bear witness,

(Finn takes the cup and drinks).

FINN : Six that are deathless
 Six holy creatures
 Have witnessed the binding.

(A sod of grass is handed in through the door and from man to man till it comes to Usheen and Caoelte who hold it up one on each side. First Finn and then Diarmuid pass under it).

CAOELTE : They are of one blood.

USHEEN : They have been born again out of the womb of the earth.

CAOELTE : Give back the sod to the ground. Give the holy sod to the Goddess. *(The Fianna pass the sod from one to another and out through the door, each one speaking these words over it in a monotonous and half audible muttering : "Blessed is the Goddess. May the ground be blessed.")*.

GOLL : This bond has shown that Finn can forgive. It has been said falsely that he never forgives although he has forgiven me. Finn has forgiven Goll. *(Finn turns to Goll effusively).*

CORMAC : Now my errand is done and I shall bid Grania and Diarmuid and all this goodly company farewell. *(He rises but lingers, talking with certain of his councillors).*

DIARMUID : I have done this though you have followed me and hunted me through the woods of Eri for seven years.

FINN : I forgave you because we had need of you, Diarmuid. *(Turning away).* Although you left the Fianna for a woman.

DIARMUID : Grania, pour out the ale for Finn.

FINN : It is right for a man to have a time for love, but now you are with your old companions again.

DIARMUID : I did not accept the peace you offered me at once, because I had taken Grania from you.

FINN : *(Looking at Grania).* It seems a long while ago, Grania. You should have been my wife seven years ago.

GRANIA : Then it was not for me that you followed Diarmuid so many years. Why did you follow him ? What reason could you have had, if it all seems so long ago.

FINN : Our marriage was to have mended an old crack in the land. It was to have joined the Fianna to the High King for ever, but it was not for this marriage's sake that I followed Diarmuid. I followed him because he had broken his oath.

DIARMUID : I shall make atonement for the breaking of my oath with fifty heads of cattle, and I will give you my black bull. Come to the door, and you will see him in the valley. He is grazing on the edge of the herd and you will see what a noble stride he has. But who is this with two of the Fianna, this fat man in the sheep skin. It is my enemy Conan. I shall be glad to drink a horn of ale with him to the forgetfulness of all enmity. *(To the others).* I have not seen you for seven years and seven years have

changed some here a little. I would drink with every one of you. I would that you had but a single hand that I might hold it this day, this happy day. (*Enter Conan with Griffan and Fergus and a shepherd*).

CONAN : Keep your spears in your hands. We are only just in time . . . a great beast . . . come . . . come . . . we will be in front of him before he can run into the wood. (*Exeunt Conan and all the Fianna except Finn*).

DIARMUID : I thought I had driven off the last of the wolves. (*Diarmuid goes out. There are only Cormac, Finn, Grania and a shepherd on the stage*).

SHEPHERD : He is a not wolf ! He is not a wolf ! He has gored twenty of my sheep. He broke out by the stepping stones. (*He goes out*).

GRANIA : The shepherd said it was not a wolf, ask him.

FINN : He said it has gored twenty of his sheep. It must be the boar I heard of as I came hither. It has come out of a dark wood to the eastward . . . a wood men are afraid of.

GRANIA : Then Diarmuid must not go to this hunting. I will call him. (*She goes to the door*). He is standing on the hillside. He is coming towards us. That is well. (*Coming down the stage to Finn*). So it was not for my sake that you followed Diarmuid. This flight and this pursuit for seven years were for no better reason than the breaking of an oath.

FINN : I followed Diarmuid because I hated him.

GRANIA : But now you have forgiven him. You are friends again. Yes, Finn, I would have you friends but my wish can be nothing to you. I was proud to think you followed Diarmuid for me. but you have said it was to avenge the breaking of an oath. This is a man's broil. No woman has part in it.

FINN : Cormac told me that it was you who persuaded Diarmuid to bring me to this house, and but for this, I would not have come.

GRANIA : It was well that you came. Men who are so great as Finn and Diarmuid must be friends. My father fears a landing of the men of Lochlann, and I am weary of this valley where there is nothing but the rising and the setting of the sun and the grazing of flocks and herds.

FINN : Did you send for me because you are weary of this valley ?

GRANIA : I wanted to see you because of your greatness. I loved Diarmuid . . . he was young and comely and you seemed to me to be old, you were grey.

FINN : I am seven years older now, and my hair is greyer. I must seem very old to you now.

GRANIA : No, you seem younger. As you stand there, as you lean upon your spear, you seem to me a young man. I do not think of your grey hair any longer.

FINN : That day in Tara you would not wear your ornaments, but now you wear them. (*Diarmuid comes slowly down the stage*).

DIARMUID : What have you to say to one another ; what were you saying to Grania, Finn ? I can see by Grania's face that she is but little pleased to see me again,

GRANIA : Why do you say this ? What has happened, Diarmuid ? That shepherd said the wolf had killed twenty sheep.

DIARMUID : There is no wolf in the thicket ; they do not know what they are hunting. (*Enter Conan*). No matter whether it be a wolf or a boar that is hiding there, I have come in to find you and Finn talking together in a way that is not to my liking. (*Cormac and the Fianna enter*).

FINN : Was it to watch me, Diarmuid, that you came back again ? And would you not have me speak to Grania ? As you will, then. (*Turning to Conan*). Conan is listening. What has he to say about this beast that has gored twenty sheep ?

CONAN : And Diarmuid has come back again because he saw it was a boar and not a wolf, and he remembered that day in Tara, when I told him he is to go out hunting a boar and be killed by it, and Diarmuid is to be torn by the tusks, he is to be bloody, his face shall be foul because it shall be bloody. I told him these things in Tara, and he remembers them, that is why he has not gone out hunting.

DIARMUID : Finn has contrived the trap for me, but I shall not fall into it. There can be no peace between Finn and me. (*He draws his sword*).

FINN : (*Who draws his sword*). By the drawing of his sword, Diarmuid has broken the peace I gave him, and the sight of Grania has brought to mind all the wrongs he has done me.

GRANIA : To you, Finn, I say that I would not have sent for you had I thought that the broil would begin again. To you, Diarmuid, I say that I will speak to what man I please, that no man shall thwart me. Where is my father ? (*Turning suddenly towards them*). No, I will not have you fight for me. Forbid them, father. (*She goes to Cormac*).

DIARMUID : Our swords shall decide between us, I shall slay you, Finn.

FINN : One of us two shall die. (*They draw their swords, and the Fianna rush between them*).

GOLL : Finn and Diarmuid cannot fight—fling up their swords, thrust the spear between them. Has Finn forgotten the blood bond ? He who raises his hand against the blood bond raises his hand against the gods.

CONAN : (*Coming towards them*). If Finn and Diarmuid cannot fight with one another, let them hunt the boar, and let Grania be given to him who kills it. Aognhus, who watches over lovers and hunters shall decide between them. (*Diarmuid lifts his sword to strike. Leaving her father, Grania comes forward*).

GRANIA : He is not worthy enough for you to strike him—give me your sword.

FINN : (*Standing in front of Conan*). No, Grania, he shall not die, he has spoken the truth. Finn and Diarmuid love the one woman.

CONAN : A tale I once told him has given him no stomach for the hunting of a boar.

FERGUS : The boar is bigger than any beast I ever saw,

GRIFFAN : It is certainly no mortal beast.

DIARMUID : What was its colour, was it covered with bristles ?

CONAN : I saw it ; it was black and bristless. (*He goes over and stands by Diarmuid*). Finn, Caoelte, Usheen look at us ; there is one terror in the heart of Diarmuid and Conan.

GRIFFAN : I saw it too, it was dark like the sea, and it made a noise like the sea in a storm.

FINN : We listen to the idle tales of spearmen. Whatever the colour of the beast may be, we shall slay it. (*The Fianna move up the stage*). Conan has spoken well. Diarmuid has little stomach for this hunting. Why did he ask for the blood bond ? It was not I who went to him . . . it was he who came to me with his hand pricked with his dagger. These are the only wounds he will dare. This blood bond keeps him from my sword and he speaks of an old tale that he may not go to the hunt. Diarmuid is craven.

DIARMUID : Finn lies ; he knows why I will not go to this hunt. He seeks my death because he loves Grania.

FERGUS : If Diarmuid does not go to this hunt, Diarmuid is craven.

GRIFFAN : Finn has said it, he is craven.

CAOELTE : Diarmuid must not go to this hunt. You have done wickedly this day, Conan, and after your kind.

FATHNA : He has a hare's heart. The gods have given him a hare's heart.

FINN : Take up your spears we will go against this beast, let him who will stay behind.

DIARMUID : Go against the boar, but it shall be as if you hunted the sea or the wind. Your spears shall break, and your hounds fly and whimper at your heels. (*Exeunt all except Grania, Cormac, and Diarmuid. After a moment's pause a horn is heard in the distance. Diarmuid takes a spear from the wall*).

GRANIA : Why do you take your spear . . . you will not go to this hunt ?

DIARMUID : This beast came to slay us. This hunt will sweep over us. It is coming through the woods, and I shall be caught up like a leaf. (*They bar the door and stand listening*).

GRANIA : They said the bear ran into the woods—it will have gone into the mountain before this.

DIARMUID : The things to come are like the wind ; they could sweep this house away. This image of death is coming like the wind—who knows what enchantment has called it out of the earth ? It was not here yesterday ; it was not here at noon. I have hunted deer in these woods and have not seen the slot of natural or unnatural swine. No, it will not bear thinking of. I am caught in this valley like a wolf in a pit . . . (*Pause*). Cormac, you sit there like a stone, why did you do this ? You came here with a tale about the men of Lochlann, but you were on the gods' business.

CORMAC : I gave you this valley to be happy in.

DIARMUID : When we are about to die, the gods give us more than we ask. There has been too much happiness here for our hunger, and I would roll up the broken meats in a sack for you to carry them away.

GRANIA : That tale has shaken your mind.

DIARMUID : Then you do not believe in it.

GRANIA : We believe, we disbelieve, and there is a time when we do not know what we think.

DIARMUID : We are always on the gods' business. Cormac in craftiness, you in lust ; they put lust into women's bodies that men may not defy the gods who made them. I, too, shall be on their business in this hunting.

GRANIA : You are not going to this hunting.

DIARMUID : I see many ornaments upon you. How long is it since you have worn them for me ? You have not worn them . . . we are common to one another night and day.

GRANIA : Take your Broad Edge, your heavy spear. Take your heavy shield.

DIARMUID : No man shall say Diarmuid went to this hunting with his battle gear upon him. (*Exit*).

GRANIA : He is gone to this hunting . . . he is gone that he may give me to Finn. (*She turns her face towards the wall and weeps*).

CORMAC : Have you ceased to love him ? (*Grania walks a few steps towards her father as if she were going to speak but her emotion overpowers her, and she returns to the same place*). If you have not ceased to love him, follow him and bring him back.

GRANIA : I will follow him in the woods ; he will take the path under the oak trees. (*Exit Grania*).

CORMAC : (*Coming down the stage*). Laban ! Laban ! (*Going to the door at the side*). They have all followed the hunters . . . there is nobody in the house . . . but Laban must be here. Laban ! Laban ! (*He goes to the wheel and takes the distaff in his hand*). There is no more flax in the distaff. (*Exit*).

Curtain

(End Act II)

ACT III.

The wooded slopes of Ben Bulbin. Diarmuid is sleeping under a tree. It is night but the dawn is beginning to break. Enter two peasants).

OLD MAN : There has been no such night as this these fifty years.

YOUNG MAN : How the wind rages, like the dragon or maybe it is the dragon himself. Listen, a tree has fallen.

OLD MAN : It is only the wind, I have seen wind like this before, and then the sheep were lost in the torrent.

YOUNG MAN : I met a herdsman whose cattle had broken out of their byres, and fifty drowned themselves in the lake.

OLD MAN : The Fianna frightened them . . . the Fianna came into the forest at midnight sounding their horns.

YOUNG MAN : And at midnight I saw two hosts fighting, one host flying and one following, and among them that were flying an old one armed man.

OLD MAN : That was Diarmuid's grandfather; he has been dead this fifty years.

YOUNG MAN : But I saw something more.

OLD MAN : What did you see, boy ?

YOUNG MAN : A gaunt grey ragged man, and he was driving this beast the Fianna are hunting. He drove it along the edge of the mountain prodding it before him with a spear.

OLD MAN : That was the god Aoghus. He watches over Diarmuid. The deaths of all these great men are foretold, and the end of the Fianna. They will perish as their forefathers did when Cairbre Cathead called the folk together and broke their power for two hundred years.

YOUNG MAN : Tell me about Cairbre Cathead.

OLD MAN : Not now ; we must go in search for our sheep. If I have lost my ram, my ewes will be useless to me. We must go now, for at day-break the Fianna will be sounding their horns. They were sounding them till the moon went down ; it was they who frightened my sheep.

YOUNG MAN : But this hunting, will the boar be killed ?

OLD MAN : It is no great matter to us, maybe a little less damage, to our fields that is all. The seasons will be none the better, the cows will have no more milk in their udders ; and my lambs, there will be no lambs next year.

YOUNG MAN : When the Fianna have killed the boar they will give us some parts of it.

OLD MAN : The Fianna have no thoughts for such as we. All that they do not eat of the boar they will throw to their dogs ; they would not think it well for us to taste meat. They beat back the invader when they can and it is more than our lives are worth to pick up a dead hare from the path.

YOUNG MAN : Hush, there is a man sleeping under the tree. If we do not wake him the beast may come upon him sleeping.

OLD MAN : Better do nothing, we must not do anything against the gods. The god Aoghnus will save him if it be pleasing to him to do so, or he may call him away. Let us begone, boy, let us find our sheep. (*Exit*).

DIARMUID : They croak like ravens over carrion—croak, croak, croak. (*Enter Grania*).

GRANIA : I have sought you all night. I have been wandering in the woods since the moon went down.

DIARMUID : What have you come for ?

GRANIA : I was afraid and have been running ; give me time to draw my breath.

DIARMUID : Your hair is down and your hands are torn with brambles.

GRANIA : Yes, look at my hands, and I am so weary, Diarmuid. I am so weary that I could lie down and die here. That mossy bank is like a bed ; lay me down there. Oh, I have come to bring you home with me.

DIARMUID : And you show me torn hands, and you hold out to me wet hair, and would have me go home. You talk of dying too, and would have me lay you on this bank. But what good is there in all this, Grania, for I have no time to listen.

GRANIA : Give up this hunting for I have had warning that you will die if you do not turn back. Turn before we lose ourselves in the darkness of the woods.

DIARMUID : I am in a little way that leads to darkness, but what does that matter to you, Grania ? Your way home winds along the hill and down into the valley ; my way is a different way, a shorter way, and the morrows that men live frighten me more than this short way. I have no heart for that crooked road of morrows.

GRANIA : (*Wringing her hands*). Come to our home, Diarmuid, come to our house.

DIARMUID : All the roads, the straight road and the crooked road, lead to blackness. If blackness be the end and there is no light beyond it ? But what have such questions to do with me ? Whatever road I am on, I will walk firmly with my sword out. (*He draws his sword*). But you have come to tell me something. What is it ? Out with it quickly for the day is breaking, and when it is broken there will be no hunting.

GRANIA : I have come to ask you to go home with me.

DIARMUID : You would have me in the straight road, and so you have come to tell me that I am in it. For it is certain that a man walks where he thinks he walks. The mind makes all ; we will talk of that some day. I tell you that you are lying to me. I am not in the road that leads on and on, and then shatters under one's feet, and becomes flying bits of darkness.

GRANIA : Diarmuid, you are going straight upon your death, if you do not come back with me.

DIARMUID : What do you know of all this that you come like a sooth-sayer ? Who has been whispering in your ear ? Who has sent you to me ?

GRANIA : I had a warning last night.

DIARMUID : From that old woman who spins ? I tell you I have had enough of her warnings. I saw her last night carrying a bundle of new flax through the woods.

GRANIA : No, Diarmuid, I left her in the house.

DIARMUID : I tell you I saw her. She is going somewhere on some evil work. But where is she going with the new flax ? What have you come to tell me about her ?

GRANIA : I have come to tell you of a dream that came to me last night.

DIARMUID : Well, what did the dream tell you ?

GRANIA : I dreamt I was sitting by Finn.

DIARMUID : I do not think much of that dream, for I saw you yesterday walking with Finn and holding his hands.

GRANIA : But I dreamed I was sitting by Finn, and that your shield was hanging among the shields of the slain over our heads.

DIARMUID : Did you not say it was a bad dream ? I have heard worse dreams than that. Ah, foolish gods, can you find nothing better than the dreams of an unfaithful wife to vex and shake my will.

GRANIA : Do not blaspheme against the gods for they are near to us now. I have been praying to them to spare you. I have been praying to them all night, while I looked for you.

DIARMUID : Yes, every man is a god in heaven, and on earth we are the hurly balls they drive hither and thither—oh, they are great hurly players. The camauns are never out of their hands. All night I have heard them laughing. I tell you I have heard them laughing. Do you not hear me ? Do you not hear me ?

GRANIA : I heard, but oh, Diarmuid, take my hands and touch my hair. They may bring some memory to your mind, some softness to your heart.

DIARMUID : Yes, yes, I remember well enough. Your hands and your hair were sweet to me long ago. No, no, yesterday, even yesterday. Let me see your hands. They are beautiful hands, torn as they are. No wonder I love them ; and this hair too. You loved me once, Grania, you loved me better than Finn. I remember it all the day before yesterday.

GRANIA : I love you still, Diarmuid.

DIARMUID : My dear one, why did you send me to Finn ? It may be that my words have been a little wild. Speak quickly, do not be afraid.

GRANIA : I sent you to Finn, because I wanted you to live among the Fianna as before you saw me.

DIARMUID : All you say is true.

GRANIA : I wanted you to be friends with Finn, because your love had become a sickness, a madness.

DIARMUID : Yes, yes it has become a madness. But it is a long while, Grania, since we were alone together.

GRANIA : No, Diarmuid not long.

DIARMUID : Yesterday is a long while and there may be no other time for wringing this secret from you. There was a thought of Finn in your mind when you sent me to him.

GRANIA : There is no secret in me ; I have told you everything. And I come through this wood by night, to bring you from this hunt, as a wife comes to her husband.

DIARMUID : Grania was not meant to sit by the fireside with children on her knees. The gods made her womb barren because she was not meant to hold children on her knees. The gods gave her a barren womb, hungry and barren like the sea. She looked from the red apple in her hand to the green apple on the bough. She looked from me to Finn, even when she first lusted for me, and after Finn there will be some other. The malignant gods made your beauty, Grania. Your hand is very weak, your arm is weak and fragile. Your hair is very soft. (*He takes her by the hair*). I could kill you as easily as I could kill a flower by the wayside.

GRANIA : Kill me if you will, kill me with your sword, here in my breast.

DIARMUID : You would have me kill you. Maybe if I killed you, all would be well.

GRANIA : Hold fast my hair, draw back my head and kill me. I would have you do it . . . (*Pause*). Why do you not do it ? If you would go to this hunting, you must do it ; for while I live, you shall not go.

DIARMUID : Let go my spear, I say ; let go my spear, if you would have your life. I see that you are thinking of Finn this very moment. I see thoughts of Finn in your eyes. Let me go, or I will let the lust out of you with this sword point.

GRANIA : Kill me, Diarmuid, I would have you do it.

DIARMUID : And leave this white body like a cut flower on the wayside.

GRANIA : Kill me, Diarmuid.

DIARMUID : I have heard the gods laugh, and I have been merry, but if I killed you I would remember everything. And I should wander in the woods seeing white and red flowers—after killing you I might kill myself—oh, that would be a good thing to do. But seeing you there, your soft hair spattered with blood, and your white hands stained with blood, I might not remember to do it. I might remember nothing but yesterday and to-day. I cannot kill you. I would not see your blood nor touch your hands. Your lips and teeth, and all this beauty I have loved seem in my eyes no better than a yellow pestilence. Grania, Grania, out of my sight. (*He goes out driving her before him. A moment after he returns alone*). That is over, let me think. Yes, yes, there is a beast coming that I am to kill. I should take him so, upon my spear. The spear will be my best weapon, but the land must be steady beneath it. If the point slipped he would be

upon me. Maybe it will be better to let him run upon my shield and kill him with my sword, while he digs his tusks into my shield. My danger will be the darkness, for the darkness makes the hand shake, and day breaks but slowly. Higher up in the woods there is a little more light. (*He goes out. Enter Caoelte and Usheen.*)

CAOELTE : We have hardly escaped with our lives. The branches touched me as the tree fell.

USHEEN : What made that great ash tree fall ?

CAOELTE : The wind had lulled and yet it crashed across our way as if it would kill us.

USHEEN : I heard a thud and a crackling of branches before it fell, as though a great rock had been thrown against it, though I saw nothing, and for some time I had heard crashings in the woods. I think that hosts have been hurling rocks at one another. All night there has been fighting on the earth, and in the air, and in the water.

CAOELTE : Never was there such a night before. As I came by the river I saw swans fighting in the air, and three fell screaming into the tree tops.

USHEEN : Have you seen how Finn's hounds whimper at his heels ?

CAOELTE : They whimper and cry till the touch of his hand gives them courage for a moment. They would not follow him at all were they not afraid of being left alone . . . (*They walk to and fro—a pause*). That light must be the beginning of the day. A pale foolish light that makes the darkness worse. The sky and earth would turn to their old works again but they have been palsy struck. Let us put this darkness out of our minds. Find us something to talk of, Usheen. Where is Diarmuid ?

DIARMUID : (*Coming forward*). Diarmuid is here, waiting whatever may befall him. Tell Finn that though the mountain arose like an ox from sleep, and came against me, and though the clouds came like eagles, and the sea upon its feet that are without number, I would not turn from this hunting.

CAOELTE : We have been seeking you. We would have you leave this hunting.

DIARMUID : It may be that you fear, and that Finn fears, because of the falling of trees and the screaming of swans, but I do not fear.

CAOELTE : Turn from this hunting, Diarmuid.

DIARMUID : I would not, had I nothing but a reason no bigger than a pea, and I have weighty reasons.

CAOELTE : It were no wonder if even we, whose death at a hunt like this has not been foretold, should turn from this hunting. For we are following no mortal beast. A man who had been trapping otters followed the footmarks last night, not knowing what they were, and as he followed they grew greater and greater and further and further apart.

DIARMUID : The night is dark.

CAOELTE : But the footmarks were deep. Deeper than any made by a mortal beast,

DIARMUID : It came yesterday out of the woods like a blight, like a flood, like a toad stool, and now it grows bigger and bigger. But so much more the need for hunters. Goodbye, comrades, goodbye. (*Exit*).

CAOELTE : I would not follow where he has gone. He is among those broken rocks where I heard screams, and sounds as of battle. They say that dwarfs and worse things have their homes among those rocks.

USHEEN : He is the only one among us who has not been shaken by this night of terror. Look, look something is coming this way.

CAOELTE : A tall staff in his hand, and he moves noiselessly, and there is another following him.

USHEEN : Draw your sword, Caoelte.

CAOELTE : It will not come out of its sheath. It is but a shepherd. We are craven and no better than Conan. (*Enter two peasants*).

OLD MAN : Be of good heart, great deliverer of Eri. I am but a shepherd looking for his sheep, and not, as well might be, some bad thing out of the rocks.

YOUNG MAN : Can you tell me, noble sirs, of any strayed sheep, or what is troubling the water and the air over our heads ?

CAOELTE : We have been wandering in the dark all night. We are as blind as you are.

OLD MAN : We must go, sirs, we must find our sheep or starve. (*Exit peasants*).

USHEEN : Maybe he was laughing at us because he was afraid. We must wait here till we hear Finn's horn. If we were to seek him we would lose him, and it may be never come alive out of the woods.

CAOELTE : We had better go further up the hill. Who is this coming ? Since dawn began, the wood has been full of shadows and sound. They are coming out of the rocks : they rise out of the rocks.

USHEEN : There is one who seems to be pushed along, and if it is but a shadow it is a heavy one. It is Conan. I can see the sheep-skin. I am glad he has not seen our fear. (*Enter Goll, Conan, Griffan, Fathna and two of the Fianna*).

GOLL : The night is over at last.

CONAN : The night is over, and the last day has begun. Give me a drink for I can go no further without one.

CAOELTE : We must go further up the hill. We must hurry on if we would find Finn again. Have you seen him ? Have you heard his horn ?

GOLL : No, he has not sounded it, but the beast will be stirring.

FATHNA : The last time I saw Finn he was standing on the rock yonder. He stood facing the dawn and shouting to his hounds. When he saw us he shouted that we were to climb up to him. He bellowed like a bull for its heifer.

GRIFFAN : But I had had climbing enough.

CONAN : Sit down ; I will go no further. When a man has got to die, is it not better for him to die sitting down than walking about, and better to die on clean ground than in the mire, or up to his middle in water. Give me your ale skin, Caoelte.

CAOELTE : I will not, Conan ; you have been asking for it all night.

CONAN : Give me your ale skin Usheen, it is the last drink I shall ever drink.

USHEEN : I will give him a drink ; he will not move until we do. (*Usheen gives Conan his ale skin*). Drink and think no more of death.

CONAN : All the disasters that have come to Diarmuid have come to him because of the spilling of the ale out of the flagon ; but I have lost both ale and ale skin and must therefore die.

CAOELTE : (*To Fathna*). We might light a fire, there must be dry leaves under these rocks. (*Fathna and Griffan go together to collect dry leaves and sticks, and they return a moment after with them*).

CONAN : We are shivering since we crossed that river ; and it was in that river I lost my ale skin ; some one plucked it from behind.

CAOELTE : I too am shivering ; the day is bleaker than the night.

CONAN : Ah, be careful with the tinder, be careful, for the first leaves are the dry ones—bring the fire a little nearer, I would die warm though I have to get cold after. Make room for me by the fire. Do you not understand that I am going to die—that Conan the Bald is going to die—you will never flout me for my great belly again, Caoelte.

CAOELTE : You are not going to die, Conan. Here I will give you a drink.

CONAN : Yellow ale, bitter on the tongue, tasting a little of the vat of red yew that it came from . . . the last drink Conan will ever drink. (*Caoelte and the others talk among themselves*). They think that all this hurly burly is for Diarmuid, but I know better ; you are my friends and I will tell you about it.

CAOELTE : Give me my ale skin, Conan.

CONAN : Not yet, I must drink a little more—and now this is the way it was—it was not the loss of the ale skin that told me I was going to die, that only showed me that some great evil was going to happen—it was a swan screaming in the trees that told me I was going to die. Before I was born, and when yet my mother was carrying with me, towards the seventh month she was one day washing clothes in the river, and she saw three geese swimming ; and while one was cackling and billing with its mate, an otter caught it by the leg and dragged it under the water ; so my mother knew something was to happen to the child under her belt, and she told me never to cross a river when there were geese about.

CAOELTE : They were swans that screamed in the trees.

CONAN : Are not swans a kind of geese ; but how do I know it was not swans my mother saw.

CAOELTE : Conan, give me my ale skin.

CONAN : Why did I keep Finn and Diarmuid from killing one another ? They could have done it so easily in Diarmuid's house. Why did I bring them to this hunt ? Conan has brought his own death upon him. (*Enter Finn*).

FINN : We have come upon the slot of a boar in the hills ; he can only just have passed by ; if we go to the bend of the stream we should come upon him. (*To Conan*). Why are you lying there ? We want every man. Get up, we will put you in the gap yonder. The boar shall not escape unless he escapes through you.

CAOELTE : Conan is in terror ; he thinks he is going to die.

FINN : Conan, get up or you may have to face this beast alone.

CONAN : Do not believe them ; it is not Diarmuid this pig is looking for, it is for me.

FINN : If Conan will not go, let him stay there. Here is a handful more leaves to warm your shins. (*Finn throws some wet leaves on the fire and quenches it*).

CONAN : You have thrown wet leaves on the fire ; now I shall die of cold. But are you leaving me ? They all go because Finn has bidden them. You leave me, Goll, yet some day Finn who has put out my fire will put out your life. Is it not the oath of the Fianna to protect one another ? Caoelte, Usheen, do you not hear me ? (*They go out laughing*). They are an evil stony-hearted proud race . . . Rot in the ear wheat, frogs spawn in the pool, yellow sickness in one's body, henbane in one's drink, lice in my beard, fleas in my sheep skin . . . A stony-hearted proud race. (*He follows them out. Enter Grania and Finn*).

FINN : You are cold and tired, Grania, and have stumbled through the wood, you are all bruised.

GRANIA : I am bruised and full of wretchedness, and I am very cold ; and the dawning of the day frightens me. However, cold as it is, I do not wish to see the sun—but I am cold, oh, the cold.

FINN : There has been a fire here ; I will blow the ashes to a blaze.

GRANIA : (*Sitting down*). Why did you not leave me to die where I had chosen.

FINN : The beast we are hunting might have run upon you and you would have been trampled and gored by it. I could not have left you there. The blaze is already beginning ; hold your hands to it.

GRANIA : I would that you had left me to be killed by it. You have planned that the death of this boar is to put me on one side or the other, to give me to Diarmuid or to give me to you. But I am no man's spoil. (*Standing up*). You have planned it all between you ; your plans are not mine. Go from me, Finn, go to this hunt and kill the boar, make the fire or go where you will.

FINN : Although I lose my chance of killing this beast I must stay with you. I will protect you.

GRANIA : It does not matter. Stay with me here or go to this hunt,

FINN : I will not leave you, if it were to spring upon you from the thicket.

GRANIA : It might be better, for I have done mischief enough. I wished that you and Diarmuid could have made peace and all would have been well, had not this evil thing broken out of the earth.

FINN : Diarmuid and I could not be at peace. The peace we made was a false peace. (*Hunting horns heard in the distance*). The hounds are at the boar's heels now. I can hear my hounds. Yes, it is Bran. Now it is Skealon. They have found their courage and are driving him from cover to cover. (*Going up the stage*). Listen—now it is Lomair.

GRANIA : Finn, I beseech you to put the desire of me out of your heart. Be Diarmuid's friend and save him. Kill the boar and save him.

FINN : If I kill the boar, will you belong to me ?

GRANIA : Not because you kill the boar.

FINN : If I were there, and Diarmuid here, and this boar coming against me, would Diarmuid save me ?

GRANIA : You have fought side by side. Will you let him die ?

FINN : Why do you wish me to do this ?

GRANIA : It was I who sent Diarmuid to you ; and by the blood bond, you are brothers.

FINN : Should not a woman's breast be more to me than a man's hand ?

GRANIA : But the blood bond—he who breaks it shall be cast out by God-kind and man-kind.

FINN : I cannot save Diarmuid, his end has been foretold. I cannot change it. The deaths of everyone of us and the end of the Fianna have been foretold. Many will die in a great battle, Oscar who is but a child will die in it, but I shall die long after by a spear thrust, and Diarmuid by the tusk of a boar, and Usheen will go far away, and Caoelte storm the house of the gods at Assaroe. (*A cry is heard close by, Finn plunges into the thicket and returns with Diarmuid who has been mortally wounded by the boar. Diarmuid struggles to his feet, and leans against a rock*).

DIARMUID : Water, is there no water ? My life is ebbing out with my blood. (*Finn goes to a well and comes back with water in his hand, but as he holds up his hand the water drips through his fingers*). If I had water I might not die.

GRANIA : Finn, bring him water in your helmet. (*Diarmuid looks from one to the other*).

DIARMUID : Grania and Finn. (*When Finn returns with his helmet filled with water, Diarmuid looks from one to the other, and then whether by accident or design he overturns the helmet*).

GRANIA : Why have you done this ? Why will you not drink the water that Finn brought you ? (*She takes up the helmet and fetches the water herself. Again Diarmuid looks from one to another and puts the water away*). For my sake, for the sake of Grania, I beseech you to drink it.

DIARMUID : It is growing lighter. There is a light coming out of the hill.

FINN : Let me bind up your wounds or in a moment you'll be gone.

DIARMUID : They're about me, they're about me. They were always about me though I could not see them.

FINN : He is dying, they are coming for him.

DIARMUID : There is somebody there by the trees . . . move me a little that I may see him. *(Finn helps Diarmuid and slightly changes his position. He begins swaying his hand as if to music).*

FINN : He hears the harp-playing of Aoghnus ; it is by music that he leads the dead.

GRANIA : Diarmuid, oh, Diarmuid ! Do not look at them. If you do not look at them you will not die. Do not die. You said once that you would be lonely without me among the immortals.

DIARMUID : I cannot hear the harp playing ; there is so much noise about me.

GRANIA : He has forgotten me.

FINN : Henceforth his business is with them.

GRANIA : Oh, Diarmuid ! Oh, Diarmuid ! Oh, Diarmuid !

DIARMUID : Someone spoke to me ; No, not the harp player, some other. It was you Finn, who spoke to me. No, no, who was it who spoke to me ? *(He falls back dead).*

FINN : He is dead : he has died as the son of the gods should die. A friend against whom I have made war is dead. I warred against him for you, Grania. *(They stand looking at each other for a moment and then Grania goes away and weeps. Enter a young man).*

YOUNG MAN : The beast you have been hunting is dead, killed by a spear thrust. Here is the spear.

FINN : The spear is mine ; give it to me. *(Walking towards Grania).* We must send for men to carry the body to the house. *(To the young man).* Go fetch King Cormac, bring him here. *(Exit shepherd).*

GRANIA : *(Trying to overcome her emotion).* What did you say, and what are you saying ? That spear with the blood upon it in your hand, where did it come from ?

FINN : It is the spear that killed the boar—a thrust behind the shoulder did it. We must send for help.

GRANIA : A great man is dead. Ah, why did I send him to you, Finn ? I thought that two who were so great should be friends.

FINN : The gods chose you, Grania, to give him love and death.

GRANIA : *(Wringing her hands).* Finn, we must mourn him. You have to go against the Lochlanders, and this one that I have taken from you will not be by your side. Before the Fianna go against the Lochlanders they must mourn him, all his comrades must mourn him. *(The hunters begin to come in from the wings).* All the Fianna must mourn him, and the shepherds of his valley. *(She goes towards the body of Diarmuid. They make way for her, and when she reaches Diarmuid's body a shepherd coming in from*

the back gives her Diarmuid's shield and his broken spear). His shield with the flying white heron upon it shall be laid upon his breast and I will lay beside him the Broad Edge that I bade him take instead of this spear I warned him not to take. Where is my father? Where is King Cormac? He shall see that Diarmuid's burning be worthy of him. (*Enter King Cormac*). Here is my father. (*She goes to her father*). Father, he is dead, one of the great men of Eri is dead. I am telling all these people that you will see to his burning that it may be worthy of him.

CORMAC: My daughter has lost a husband and Eri a defender. The Fianna must mourn him, and all the shepherds of this valley. Finn son of Cool, you too shall watch over this mourning. (*Finn goes over and stands by her*).

GRANIA: There are birch trees upon the mountain that the summer has made ready for the flame. Every shepherd shall bring a tree and they shall be heaped to a great height. Diarmuid shall be laid upon them and when they are lighted all people that are on the western shore shall see the blaze.

CAOELTE: I will send messengers to gather the swift runners, and the swift riders, and the boxers, and the throwers of the weight, that the funeral games be worthy of him.

USHEEN: I shall send messengers who will gather the harpers and gather the women that his funeral songs may be well sung. Many queens shall mourn him to the sound of harps, for when he lived there was none that would not have taken Grania's place, and wandered with him in her stead. It may be that he will come with Aognhus out of the heart of some hill and stand invisible among us and know that he is not forgotten.

FINN: The best of my horses shall be killed with his own horse that he may have noble horses when he awakes. (*Turning to the men who have brought in the litter*). Carry him gently for he was well-beloved when alive. (*They lay Diarmuid's body upon the litter. Finn turns to Grania*). Lay his shield upon his breast. (*Grania walks again to the body and lays the shield upon Diarmuid. The men lift the litter and carry it slowly to the wood*).

CORMAC: Diarmuid is dead, but the Fianna are united and the Lochlanders shall be driven into the sea. (*Finn, Cormac, and Grania go up the stage, following the procession. Conan remains warming his shins by the fire*).

CONAN: Grania makes great mourning for Diarmuid, but her welcome to Finn shall be greater.

DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

By A. J. Leventhal

HOUSE UNDER GREEN SHADOWS. By Maurice G. Meldon. Abbey Theatre.
ON NE BADINE PAS AVEC L'AMOUR. By Alfred de Musset. Peacock Theatre.
MINNA VON BARNHELM. By Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Peacock Theatre.
THE DUBLIN MARIONETTE GROUP. Peacock Theatre.
THE OLD LADIES. By Rodney Ackland and Hugh Walpole. Gate Theatre.

John Keats is mythically reputed to have been killed by an article in the *Quarterly*; Mr. Meldon's play at the Abbey Theatre was, it is said, only allowed a life of one week by the Daily Press. If, in fact, a *Quarterly* had the power of life and death over works of art, if not over the artists themselves, I would through this magazine endeavour to resurrect a play which, though it had faults, was one of the most promising first plays at this theatre that has been seen for a long time. The policy of the Abbey to play to packed houses may be sound economics based on realist balance-sheets but there must be something wrong with a National Theatre that does not risk a second week on a piece which the directors themselves believed worthy of production in the first instance. Our Government is full of cultural plans and large sums are voted to make the world aware of us artistically and politically. But at home the subsidy to a theatre towards which, those very foreigners who may, by successful propagation of the Irish way of life, be tempted to our shores, are likely first to gravitate, remains at a figure totally inadequate to its needs.

Edward and Florence Carten, brother and sister, living in the same big, decaying house, suspicious of each other, both frustrated, with Florence living in an hallucinatory past and Edward in an illusory present—these two creations alone mark the playwright as a writer of power and imagination.

There were dramatic moments in the play which are unforgettable. When Florence in one of her schizophrenic attacks sees the room as it was in times of prosperity and moves towards the non-existent piano and plays on the bureau book-case, we get a *frisson* that only genuine stage madness can produce. And again when Florence leaves the audience and her brother in doubt as to whether she is strangling or helping him after a heart attack, there is in this echo of *Night Must Fall*, a moment of gripping tenseness. It is objected that Florence talks to and gets replies from the corporeal ghost of her dead lover. But why not? Ghosts have long been a stage convention and must we only, like St. Joan, hear voices? Hallucinations are real to the patient and were seen by such sane people as de Musset and W. B. Yeats.

Technically there was much that could have been improved; some of the characters had no significance in the action. But that Mr. Meldon could draw a minor part was evident from the way the servant, Mrs. Barth, came to life. Maire Ní Chatháin could not have given so fine a performance without the author's revelatory script. There were too many empty stages; the characters all too often met by accident and were not interwoven in the development of the play.

Michael Dolan, especially towards the end, gave an effective performance as the master of Tullakeevan House; he was not convincing in the early stages. May Craig was superb in the final scene but seemed at a loss when she literally

let down her hair without doing so in the colloquial metaphorical sense. Vere Dudgeon's setting reflected the atmosphere of the whole play. Ria Mooney was handicapped by the inability of the players to find the correct 'ascendancy' accent, but, this notwithstanding, she pulled together a play obviously deficient in technique to make of it a production that held the audience and must have revealed his own promise to the author. If the *House Under Green Shadows* were rewritten here and there, it might bring the crowds necessary to ensure a 'run.'

The Dublin University Modern Language Society once again found a way of doubling instruction with entertainment both for its own members and such numbers of the public as could find seats in the small auditorium of the Peacock Theatre during the run of their French and German plays. *On ne badine pas avec l'amour*, that evergreen proverb comedy of de Musset dissolves into tears without which it would seem French cannot be acquired. The players, however, had not wept in vain for the Gallic tongue came trippingly (with an odd stumble) from their lips. The triangle of the sophisticated Camille (Selma Burrows more sincere than convincing), Perdican (Webster Wilson, genteely amorous) and the innocent Rosette (dressed more like a coquette than a peasant) which ends in the latter's death, has its grotesque and comic characters as a periphery: The Baron (played with unnecessary noise and movement by Martin Moscow) and those two *sacs à vin*, Blazius and the *curé* Bridaine (Harry Keating and Michael Crowe as full of fun as of wine). The choir of peasants in a Watteauesque grouping was most impressive.

It is strange that de Musset having failed with his first plays written with his mind on stage production should only succeed when he wrote for enjoyment in an arm-chair at home:

Un spectacle ennuyeux est chose assez commune,

Et tu verras le mien sans quitter ton fauteuil.

He must have had a premonition of the radio.

The German play was well chosen. We very rarely get an opportunity of seeing Lessing's 18th century masterpiece *Minna von Barnhelm*. Minna, long before Shaw's Anne in *Man and Superman*, betrays female technique in getting her man. She is not so outspoken as the modern character but is all the more real on that account. Major von Tellheim reminds us that a German army officer after the Seven Years War had ideas about honour as lofty as a hero in a Corneille drama and even if we had not many other works to prove that Lessing was fired with the highest ethical ideals, this comedy brings evidence of nobility of thought as it does of craftsmanship. The key in which the production was set was lower than that of the French play. There was less fussiness; the quiet sincerity at which the principal characters in the de Musset play aimed only to miss the target, was here the pregnant quiet of poise and a sincerity which reached the heart of the audience. There was also the impression that the players were speaking the same language, which was lacking to some extent in the French piece.

Felicitas Kersten's Minna was subtle and convincing and Percy Richer's von Tellheim, though good, might have been a little less monotonous. Of the remainder of a generally efficient cast, Aglagja Schnitter, Peter Little, Michael Crowe and James Hoey were outstanding.

To someone who has never seen a puppet show before, the first surprise is the height and smallness of the curtains behind the normal stage front curtain. As the evening goes on one becomes aware more and more of the secret subterranean activity which gives the puppets life. The first item on the programme *The Stuttering Lovers* was enchanting. It was short, agreeably sung by Frank Reynolds and the geese radiated charm in their literally touching affection for each other. In fact the production generally was most successful when animals gambolled across the stage. Whilst we can tolerate a little locomotor-ataxia in animals and find it amusing, a lurching gait in a heroine might suggest inebriation, as in the case of the doll in *The Toy Box*. This play, if we can call it a play, was too long and difficult to follow. There was music but neither narrator nor dubbing voices and the programme with its synopsis could not be consulted in the dark. This was a love story and the scope of puppets manipulated by fingers, as distinct from strings or wires, is limited to burlesque. The most living character in *The Toy Box* was the obstinate little elephant and the most exciting scene was the internecine strife of the toy soldiers. Vere Dudgeon's caramel-wrapper curtain was an inspiration.

Lorca's *Don Cristobal*, being a farce, lent itself to burlesque and the drunken Don Cristobal and Doña Rosita—fat waddling reincarnation of the bawd Celestina—lurched to good effect. These two marionettes were excellently made and dressed. The introduction by the poet puppet led us to believe that we were to hear the coarse tongue of the masses from whom all good balladry springs but the translator must have bowdlerised the text for the Iberian salt rarely soiled the pure lips of the speakers. All we heard were a few words which might be considered rude in the nursery.

The Marionette Group deserves our thanks and appreciation for what must be a most difficult orchestration of puppet movement, *décor*, voice, music and atmosphere, boxed up as it were in their subterranean world. This is certainly a medium which could be used to help children towards an appreciation of poetry with its visual appeal and miniature representation.

If the *House Under Green Shadows* offered a thrill or two, *The Old Ladies* after a slow first act resolved itself into a prolonged attack on our nervous system, acceptable in its suspense up to a point but reach near Guignol horror in its *dénouement*. The slowness of the first act was due to the writing and not to the three actresses on whom the burden of the whole play rested. It is difficult to decide which of the three was most exciting. Coralie Carmichael played the evil, acquisitive, highly-coloured, half-mad part of Agatha Payne with carefully thought-out mannerisms. Dorothy Casey's Lucy Amorest was a model of restraint; she was a typically English gentlewoman fallen on bad times. But, in the end, it is to Marjory Hawtrey as May Derringer that I would award the palm for a performance that moved from twittering, incoherent, spinsterish futility to an awareness that she in her weakness could never resist Agatha's urgent covetousness. Her final effort to hold on to the coloured glass bauble, which she only yields in death, could scarcely have been bettered by any living actress.

Hilton Edward's production was as masterful as ever, whilst the setting which reminded me of a similar one by Denis Johnston in Toller's *Hoppla*, was a triumph for Michael O'Herlihy.

Art Notes

By Edward Sheehy.

JAMES SLEATOR, P.R.H.A. : MEMORIAL EXHIBITION. The Victor Waddington Galleries.

EXHIBITION BY DONLEAVY. The Dublin Painters' Gallery.

RECENT PAINTINGS BY GEORGE F. CAMPBELL. The Victor Waddington Galleries.

PICTURES BY EVA AND LETITIA HAMILTON. The Dublin Painters' Gallery.

EXHIBITION BY BEATRICE SALKELD, JOHN FRENCH AND MICHAEL MORROW. The Grafton Gallery.

PAINTINGS AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY PATRICK PYE. The Dublin Painters' Gallery.

The spate of exhibitions in the early months of this year belies the season's usual reputation as the doldrums of the painting year. Particularly welcome are a number of very young painters exhibiting, outside major group shows, for the first time and offering the more modest connoisseur an opportunity of talent-spotting at small financial risk. And even though some of these goslings can never become swans, they will assuredly never become anything without encouragement now when they need it most.

The organisation of a memorial exhibition of the work of the late James Sleator was an admirable idea for which our thanks are due to Victor Waddington who housed it and to Maurice MacGonigal who was responsible for the difficult task of making a significant and representative selection from works available in Dublin. In fact this was Dublin's first opportunity of seeing Sleator's work as a whole and therefore of realising his consistently high achievement as a portrait painter. For though Sleator was a born academician who placed overwhelming emphasis on quality and craftsmanship and whose vision of reality was never disturbed by the fevers of modernism, he never, on the other hand suffered from the smugness of the mere technician or the shallowness of the fashionable painter. Looking now at his portraits of such dissimilar people one realises his most valuable characteristic was a literal honesty of vision, coupled with a warmly human feeling for the character of his sitter. Here in his portrait of Rutherford Mayne, or Lennox Robinson, or Jack B. Yeats is no trace of fashionable posturing or false dramatisation; but a feeling for the person expressed with just that little necessary salt of *genre*. As well as that his art is so effortless as to be self-concealing and it is only by taking thought that one is conscious of the warmth and subtlety of his palette and the quietly sensuous quality of his paint. One-time pupil and collaborator of Sir William Orpen's, one feels now that his reputation has been unduly overshadowed by that of the master and that Sleator was, in fact, a master in his own right.

Donleavy, a young American painter, has probably achieved a typical transatlantic ambition in having had three full-scale one-man exhibitions within the past twelve months. His first show gave promise in a number of sensitive and spontaneous wash drawings and suggested that with hard work, discipline and more self-criticism he might have developed an individual talent. Though one must allow him the hard work it has been diffused over such a wide field, dissipated in the too violent exploitation of such a variety of idioms that the result appears a riot of meaningless violence, self-consciously startling naïveté and undigested influences. An introduction to the catalogue, written with something less than the nose-thumbing self-revelation of Henry Miller, the goofy Saroyan-esque titles, bear out the general absence of seriousness in the show. However, the result shows that mere lack of restraint is not sufficient to make a modern painter,

One is glad to see that George Campbell has completely outgrown the shallow dramatics of what might, but for its fortunately short duration, be called his Spanish period. A great deal of his work is still characterised by the superimposition of a mild cubism on an art that is fundamentally representational, a combination too often lacking in synthesis. Frequently also he shows a considerable mastery of quality; only too often it appears the kind of virtuosity which is its own reward. At his present exhibition, however, there are a number of canvases which achieve both beauty and a quiet individuality. I liked the rich tones and lyrical suggestiveness of *Fallen Branches*, the sweep and harmonious unity of *Bogland*, the formal and satisfying strength of *Spring Day*, *Connemara Town*. I feel that an increasing richness of colour, as for instance in the yellows and umbers of *Farm, Co. Down*, or in *Ruined Cottages*, is a factor making for the unity of his pictures.

The work of the Misses Hamilton retains its appeal for a special public. In pictures like *The Calary Hunt Races* or *The North Kildare Harriers*, Letitia continues to paint effectively topical records of Irish country life. In these she uses a straightforward realism which is simple and unaffected. I like less well those pictures in which she uses a heavy and rather cloying impasto.

The most interesting feature of the triple exhibition at the Grafton Gallery was in the glazed pottery tiles by John French. These were well designed, with simplicity and a certain charming originality, giving an excellent example of applied art and one for which there should be a considerable demand considering our dearth of work in this field. His painting, on the other hand, though it does show a capacity for organisation, leans too heavily on the kind of formalism invented by George Braque. We shall have to await something more personal before venturing to express an opinion on his promise or otherwise as a painter. Beatrice Salkeld paints with a smooth and polished sophistication almost indistinguishable from that of her father. While one is astonished at such virtuosity in so young a painter, one is disturbed by the absence of that adventurousness, even with its attendant uncertainties, we expect from youth. Here again there is the impression that the painter is not working out of her own experience or venturing to see with her own eyes. With these reservations I like her portrait *The Little Sister* which had, somehow, a tenderness which overcame its polished manner. If Michael Morrow continues in the way that he is going he will be listed among our primitives. I feel, however, that his primitivism is rather self-conscious and that the muddy paint, inexpert drawing and laboured quality are carefully cultivated effects. *Portrait*, a pleasant, if not strikingly original work, shows none of these calculated crudities; while his wood-engravings show talent as an illustrator which should be worth cultivating. The genuine primitive, Rousseau for instance, is always painting to the limits of his technique.

I must confess to having been profoundly moved and disturbed by Patrick Pye's exhibition. I can only say that the intensity and sincerity of his vision, and the power of his imagination are so great that they succeed in overcoming an almost complete absence of technique. His line is poor, his colour weak, and yet one has a feeling that he is a visionary obsessed with a sense of ultimate values, a Christian visionary who has suddenly been made aware of the mystery of the Incarnation, while still tied to the bloody chaos of this modern waste-land. Pye is still very young; he has something vital to say. Time and work should make him a painter to be reckoned with,

BOOK REVIEWS

WILD EARTH. By Padraic Colum. The Talbot Press, Dublin. 6s.

THIS INSUBSTANTIAL PAGEANT. By Monk Gibbon. Phoenix House. 10s. 6d.

RESERVATIONS. By Valentin Iremonger. Envoy, Dublin. 6s.

SELECTED POEMS. By Robert Farren. Sheed and Ward. 10s. 6d.

This *Wild Earth* is not a reprint of the 1907 volume, but includes a number of later poems chosen for their similarity of mood or theme. Colum was, of course, one of the young poets of A.E.'s *New Songs*, and his *Wild Earth*, published three years later, confirmed that a new and original poet had arrived. The distinguishing characteristic was a simplicity of outline, a starkness, a direct transcription, as it were, of peasant life and countryside undimmed by dream or distance. For all its craftsmanship, his verse breathed an earthier, less literary, air than his predecessors'. Colum has written much poetry since then, and economy of diction and mastery of the craft are still keynotes of all he writes. But the old naturalness of attitude in which *Wild Earth* was shaped has become more self-conscious, and the best of that book has never since been surpassed. To open this welcome edition from an Irish publisher is to remember and recapture in part that thrill of mingled surprise and recognition which Padraic Colum's truly original poetry aroused at a first meeting long ago.

Fecundity and joy, so long regarded as disreputable by so many stern ascetics among the begetters and appraisers of English poetry, are, one begins to hope, becoming respectable again. Anyhow, Monk Gibbon has always gone his own way, industrious and productive and careless of contemporary fashions. Like others, he has, of course, been influenced by what delights and interests him. And, when the source of pleasure was a literary one, the influence has sometimes appeared on the face as well as in the spirit of his work, as when he writes, among his more recent poems:—

Maiden, your looks, your gestures,
A glance, a smile on your part,
Your lashes that cast dark shadows,
Weigh like snow on the heart,

or, among his earlier:—

He who loves beauty wisely
Loves her least touch;
She can scourge him with arrows
Who loves too much;

Who turns aside, who lingers,
Who leaves the throng,
She can scourge him with scorpions
Who loves too long.

A.E. was, of course, a major influence in his life, and sometimes one remembers this in reading the prose poems of *The Tremulous String*; but more often one is aware only of Monk Gibbon's own thought and his intense pleasure in the thing seen. Prose poems are a direct invitation to preciousness, but some of these pieces have the freshness and simplicity of Theocritus. Freshness, simplicity,

a direct and unaffected utterance, are characteristics of almost all the poems, too; which does not mean that Monk Gibbon's thought, or his emotions either, are without subtlety and depth. He has questions to ask, and he can pass from a Caroline grace or from such a snatch of song as

She gave her mouth, as fresh as dawn,
As sweet as Spring, as cool as dew,
To meet my own, and when they met
It seemed my own was new. . . .

to the packed, racked, clipped, hammered and twisted exercises of the Sonnets, reminiscent of Hopkins, whom one of them celebrates.

There is nothing recognisably Irish about Monk Gibbon's verse, though much of it draws inspiration and image from Irish landscape. Even the Donegal Eclogues, in spite of certain Irish turns of speech, do not proclaim their nationality undeniably and unmistakably as does, say, Colum's *Cradle Song* or *Interior*. Nor is there any brand indicating the country of origin of Valentin Iremonger's *Reservations*. But that is the only similarity between the two poets. Where Monk Gibbon is various and many-voiced, Iremonger is restricted and of one tone; where the older poet is easy in himself, self-delighting, a happy extrovert even in his more uncertain moods, the latter is uneasy, self-critical, sardonic, self-pitying, and a victim of Angst. Iremonger deals with an immediate present overhung with fear and the shadowy menace of circumstance. In spite of a wry wit and of occasional fun, his verse seems to be a work of conscience, an ascetic exercise, sometimes a painful duty. As such it has much in common with a kind of poetry produced in quantity in England during the late twenties and the thirties. Many eminent critics damned all this verse as a mere fashion, a commercial imitation of the arch-pretender Eliot, whereas, in fact, its mood and its almost toneless music were a most natural expression of the despair and disillusion imposed upon thoughtful youth by a paranoid civilization.

But here is stony soil: my life's short roots
Snap and break off in society's tough earth.
So Spring and Winter are the same to me
Whose seed is stunted with the year's advance.
I have no hands to mutter how I cry
Or love to guard the tendrils of my days.

The chatter and twitter, the brilliance and movement of Spring, "the whole great hot-lipped ensemble of buds and birds" stop the young man suddenly:

There is something here I do not get,
Some menace that I do not comprehend. . . .

There is no doubt of Mr. Iremonger's technical capacity or of his wit. Much of the interest of his verse depends upon what Professor Bateson has called "the semantic gap," the surprise of unexpected and contrasting elements. The imagery and metaphor, carefully chosen to de-romanticise experience, are usually (but not always) logically supportable, but, as in so many of his English and American familiars, the method is overworked until the repetitive use of the deflating slang or commonplace becomes at last monotonous and stale. *Reservations*, Mr. Iremonger's first book, includes those poems which won the A.E. Memorial Prize in 1945, and most of the remaining poems are four or five years old.

Mr. Farren's *Selected Poems* include about one-third of that remarkable biography in verse of Colm Cille, *This Man Was Ireland* or *The First Exile*. That poem, or series of poems, vibrates with a vigorous pleasure in life, a sturdy, boisterous delight in all the teeming activity of earth—men, beasts and plants. It is an epic of a time when Christianity, flushed with its conquest of paganism, was quick with missionary zeal and had not paused to argue dogmatic subtleties. Certainty, absolute religious certainty, was the basis of a hardy optimism, a joy in labour. That certainty, and its resultant single-minded vigour, informs all Robert Farren's work, or most of it. He is a complete contrast to Iremonger walking naked among unknown dangers to an unknown end. To say that Mr. Farren escapes the modern anxious, ironic fear and contempt of human life on earth is not to suggest either a brash self-confidence or an indifference to pain and injustice, nor yet a romantic obsession with ideal relationships. He is a religious poet, in that his conception of existence rests upon an unshaken religious conviction: his poetry is praise not question, and he seems to have returned from exploration of the Gaelic past not only armed with recovered technical devices, but bearing the bright protection of a young, untroubled faith. This very acceptance of dogma unassailed implies a certain rigidity, a singleness of vision, which is matched by a rigid or mechanical quality in the structure of his verse. One is aware of the tools, and of the vigorous handling of the tools with which he hammers out his intricate patterns upon proved metal.

W. P. M.

A STUDY OF SIX PLAYS BY IBSEN. By Brian W. Downs. Cambridge University Press. 15s.

Professor's Down's study of Ibsen is based on the six plays that he believes "illustrate best the various facets of his art and mind": *Loves's Comedy*, his use of comedy and satire; *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, his conception of man's duty and destiny; *A Doll's House*, concern with contemporary problems; *The Wild Duck*, his use of symbols; *The Master Builder*, the autobiographical element that had its place in most of his writing.

Ibsen is shown confronted with the demands of nationalism as to the content of his work, with the then current fervour for didacticism, his own doubts of his mission in life, and with the ideas of Kierkegaard. The first he was to reject; but for long he was deeply impressed by the challenge of George Brandes that he "make himself resolutely and constructively 'modern' by falling in with his general programme of 'submitting problems to debate' ". Yet the release this gave him from the tormenting belief that, as Kierkegaard proclaimed, the aesthete was inferior to religious, or even ethical man, finally led to his abandoning plays with a message in order to explore the problems and inner drama that increasingly absorbed him—"the liberation of the personality from restrictions and inhibitions," human beings and their destinies. There is a careful examination of Kierkegaard's influence—an influence that Ibsen indignantly and naturally denied for his approach to the Kierkegaardian ideas in circulation was his own. But it would have been difficult for Ibsen not to be profoundly aware of the significance of that tragic, introverted and unbalanced thinker who, pursuing one God, was manacled to Another. There was first his uneasiness, guilt even, before the latter's doctrine that the aesthete had small merit compared with the religious.

(It is pointed out, "it may be argued that his perturbation lies at the root of his tragic power.") There was at least partial acceptance of Kierkegaard's argument as to the relation between hereditary guilt and tragedy; and, as has been often stressed, the implications of *Brand* suggest parallels with Kierkegaardian thought. Professor Down's analysis proves that this ascription is "only very partially tenable;" but the torment that Brand inflicted on himself and his fellow-beings is perhaps rightly understood in the light of one brief entry in Kierkegaard's diary: "The thought that God is love, in the sense that He is always the same, is so abstract that fundamentally it is a sceptical thought." And the latter's comment on a writer's remark that the two powers that rule the world are ideas and women: "but if things are really to get going, then ideas must rule alone," finds in Ibsen at times a similar emphasis—though this is qualified by what Professor Downs has noted: "Ibsen, to be sure, often disclosed an antipathy to erotic passion verging upon the prudish . . ."

Love's Comedy is studied as a satirical attack on middle-class conventions and complacent hypocrisy.

"The satire of it, both in expression and nature, had so little geniality; there were so few occasions for hearty laughter, or for *any* laughter without disturbing *arrière-pensée*; and the shadows behind the high lights of wit and ridicule involved so much mystery. Satire, of course, there had been abundantly in the theatre . . . but it had not cut uncomfortably near the bone."

Brand "reflects parabolically a moral crisis through which he had passed and which proved grave enough to call for cathartic treatment of corresponding severity." *Peer Gynt* is contrasted with Goethe's *Faust*; the immediacy of its problems, and Ibsen's use of the living model are considered in *A Doll's House*; his 'analytic technique' and what is aptly called 'the process of exhumation' that became an integral part of his dramas are further examined in *The Wild Duck* and *The Master Builder*. The full analysis of the plays takes into account Ibsen's attitude to Romanticism, the delineation of his characters, his interest in egoists, his symbolism, his mastery of 'theatrical effectiveness' and construction in general, the genesis and production of his plays; and demonstrates that they are "subjective expressions of his personal emotions and sentiments," or, as Ibsen himself said of his writings, they "had their origin in a mood and a personal situation."

Professor Downs has written a book that the student of Ibsen will value as illuminating and scholarly exegesis, and the ordinary playgoer appreciate as commentary on the plays and their production, and on Ibsen as man and playwright.

KNOWLEDGE, REALITY AND LIFE. By C. A. Richardson. Harrap. 15s.

A major part of Mr. Richardson's book is devoted to the general theory of knowledge. He argues that the most important fact for epistemology is "that symbols occur as a result of processes within experience." Symbols he defines as "responses to experiential situations and not labels having a one-one correspondence with definite entities." The rules that determine symbol patterns, and the criteria of their truth are examined; also the nature of meaning and analysis; the distinctions between meaning and definition, knowledge and acquaintance,

and between the 'emotive' and the 'informative' uses of symbols. To illustrate this thesis, he discusses the problems of fundamental physics, the basic symbolism in certain regions of psychological study, and the relationship between the symbol systems of biology and physics. His epistemological theory is then applied to ethics and metaphysics. He develops a theory of 'ethical eutonism,' which "comprises the eutonic principle—namely, that the only intelligible and significant aim of human activity is the attainment of a stable and durable state of completely eutonic experience" together with his view of freedom and moral responsibility. Here he argues that in the monadic experience the separation between agent and environment is symbolic and that 'freedom' and 'determinism' are relative terms.

After discussing the main types of metaphysical theory, he suggests that monadistic metaphysics is not incompatible with such various symbol systems of knowledge as those of physics, biology and psychology. Monadism seeks to integrate—and he believes such integration possible in principle—"the various symbol systems, which are themselves parts of experience." He insists that "symbols are not labels affixed to definite entities but tools constructed for a certain purpose which develop as such in experience," and that the antithesis between singularism and pluralism is not ultimate. He therefore attacks the 'fallacy of pseudo-transcendence' and argues that the assumption of universals is unnecessary.

"The fact is that the realm of universals, or 'eternal object,' is as it were a static world of distinct and separate entities, whereas the world of concrete experience is dynamic and continuous—an integral unity. I find it difficult to see how real being can be ascribed to the former, or how it can enter into an intelligible relation to the latter."

Mr. Richardson has written a very interesting and stimulating book; but his view—unless one misunderstands him—of universals as *ersatz* particulars seems rather odd.

THE ENGLAND OF ELIZABETH. By A. L. Rowse. Macmillan. 25s.

Mr. A. L. Rowse in his preface states that his intention has been "to attempt a synoptic view of the whole Elizabethan Age"; and in this first volume the emphasis is on the structure of its society: the land, economic developments, the part played by London and the towns, the diversity of social classes, government, administration and law, the Church as a social institution and in relation to Catholics and Puritans, the place of education in the community. "Within the work there are various dominant themes corresponding to the rhythms observable in the society": the impact of the Reformation, Elizabeth's difficult heritage and what was made of it, the rise of the gentry and their overt and expanding influence.

The wealth of material, subject to illuminating scholarship, illustrates Mr. Rowse's contention that the Elizabethan Age "is alive and all round us and within us." The changing look of the English countryside noted in the pages of Elizabethan books of agriculture; pictorial maps tracing the shape of London, "beautiful, Gothic and irregular"; the robust life of the towns quick with new

economic forces and techniques, increasing mobility of labour, with credit and capital; the administrators controlling where they can that restless, obstinate, impulsive surge so far beyond the medieval reach; the powerful, learned and the rich: these are seen in living relationship to the present, or near enough to be understood. Thus he writes of the still remaining Elizabethan houses:

"These monuments are their shells, like the tracings of a coral reef left when the molluscs are departed. But if you listen closely they retain the whisperings, the faint rumours of their former life, echoing and shadowy now of what was busy, bustling and vital then."

For Mr. Rowse the scholars—geographers, cartographers, antiquarians and the rest of those eager men—the adventurers, administrators, courtiers and poets are living, and often loved, figures; to their zest and vehement pride he is completely attuned. The individual portraits are wonderfully done: the supple appreciative presentation of Elizabeth in her immense variety, of Gresham, Burghley, John Stow, Thomas Smythe, and so many others. And always there is the telling phrase: Elizabeth, "a great *prima donna* in the realm of politics"; James, "as a don, he was apt to take seriously what he thought he believed"; Burghley, "rather a Victorian character in that glittering Renaissance Court"; Father Parsons, "a brilliant intriguer, his hands were calloused with wire-pulling."

Mr. Rowse has described amply and acutely a vigorous unified structure, and in it the rise of individuals and families no less than that of towns, the growth of municipal power as well as that of the state, the adjustments between secular and religious thought, the progress of Common and Civil Law, the struggles and pressures of abounding life, and a literature and language to do it all justice. On these exact and rich pages fall—sometimes with bleak effect—his acid and impervious asides. Not to everyone's taste will be his large contempt for the common people, the even tittering scorn of those who in life and death were dedicated to religious beliefs. When he refers to "the comic old Elizabethan bundles of bishops," to the 'loathsome' Puritans, and the "burnings of people and (what was more valuable) works of art," when he adds:

"The gentry and the middle class believed in education for their children and they made strenuous efforts to rectify the position. They thought education less important for the people, and they were right." one may think his values and taste occasionally awry. But against this must be set his passionate regret for the beauty that was defaced and destroyed by iconoclasts, his response to the magnificent phrases of the Prayer Book, to the Elizabethan music with its "sense of the brief transitoriness of life," to its superb poetry. Ultimately the flurry of prejudices subsides in the greatness of his achievement.

IRISH POETS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. Edited by Geoffrey Taylor.
Routledge & Kegan Paul. 12s. 6d.

Every good anthology compiled by a single editor must be a somewhat personal thing and the charm of many collections lies in the unity imposed by one man's taste. But the freedom of an editor's choice is, or ought to be, subject to restrictions and compulsions when his selection claims to be a presentation of the

poetry of a period or a people. In making such a claim the compiler acknowledges a duty, and predilection must come to terms with public office. When a volume appears under the title *Irish Poets of the Nineteenth Century*, and especially when it forms one of such a series as *The Muses' Library*, the reader is entitled to expect a full and fair representation of the entire poetic output of the period. It is easy, of course, for the critic to complain of omissions: he had not to worry about keeping the selection within a prescribed limit of size. But the plan of this collection does allow justification for such complaints. There are about four hundred pages in the book (including introductions and notes) and of these over two hundred and ninety are given to five poets, leaving just over one hundred pages for all the others. Considerations of space, then, were not paramount in limiting the number of poets. Nevertheless Mr. Taylor obviously had to apply other than qualitative tests for inclusion. "The test that I have applied to poets," he says, "is that they must have been Irish by birth, and they must have written poetry with some Irish reference, either historical or topographical,"—and straightaway he excludes George Darley because he, like O'Shaughnessy, "did not even pay lip-service to Ireland." Now the test of Irish reference is not applied to individual poems in the collection (in fact a high percentage have no such reference) and surely Darley's *Fight of the Forlorn*, for instance, entitled him to entrance with a number of other poems. Neither Moore nor Yeats, of course, lack the official qualifications: they are excluded because, though they both wrote in the nineteenth century, "the first belongs rather to the eighteenth, and the second to the twentieth." But does Moore really not belong to the nineteenth century in more than mere dates and is the early Yeats not really of the nineties? And in excluding with Yeats such poets as John Todhunter, Katharine Tynan, Dora Sigerson, Thomas Boyd, Emily Lawless, Moira O'Neill, Nora Hopper, Jane Barlow, George Sigerson, Douglas Hyde, Æ—in fact, almost all the older poets of The Revival—an essential element of the late nineteenth century in Ireland is arbitrarily deleted. Perhaps some of these, Douglas Hyde and Æ in particular, belong so much to the twentieth century that their exclusion was inevitable; perhaps it is right to commit the whole of The Revival to the later period—but why then include one poem by Rolleston? However one may justify the exclusion of so many late-comers one cannot but feel that the almost complete omission of the work of the Young Ireland poets and of almost all political verse distorts entirely the picture of the period. Admittedly much of it is remarkable for its patriotic rather than its poetic merit but, even on purely literary grounds, there are poems by Richard Dalton Williams, Denis Florence McCarthy, John Savage or Speranza—to mention only a few—whose quality is at least as good as (say) William Wilkin's *Magazine Fort*, or as the mechanics of Father Prout or, indeed, as some of the insipid trifles by the chosen five. Mr. Taylor's five best poets are William Allingham, J. J. Callanan, Aubrey de Vere, Sir Samuel Ferguson, T. C. Irwin, Mangan and J. F. O'Donnell. The last is something of a surprise selection; one would have expected to find his *Spinning Song* and perhaps one or two other pieces among the work of the lesser poets, where William Larminie has one short poem. In his introduction to his selection from O'Donnell, Mr. Taylor mentions the rewards which greet a wanderer in the byways of English poetry and goes on to say: "Irish poetry of the nineteenth century is but a net-work of such byways—bohreens we should call them—though

we try sometimes to mark some of them on the map as main thoroughfares. Between Tom Moore and Yeats, then, if we would travel at all, it is down these small roads we must go. And anyhow, there are times when a lane has charms that many a main road lacks." Mr. Taylor is no follower of fads and fashions and no subscriber to current literary authority : he is a genuine lover of the charming byways of descriptive and nicely moralistic minor verse. More pity then that in concentrating upon his chosen five he deprived his readers of so many of the shy pleasures he must have met with in his wanderings about the bohreens. And though his own taste is for the gentle, domestic and controlled in scene and expression, he might well have introduced more than he has of the lustier and more "enthusiastic" characters that haunt our hedges. John Banim, George Savage Armstrong, William Blacker, J. S. Lefanu, C. J. Kickham, T. D'Arcy, McGee, and Fanny Parnell are but a few of one school or the other we might well be glad to meet. To be blunt about it, Mr. Taylor's presentation of nineteenth century Irish poets lacks balance and generality. And, since complaints never come singly, it must be added that the indexing is unsatisfactory. Although there is an adequate introduction to each of the more important poets and a note upon each of the lesser poets the titles of the poems by each are not given. There is, in fact, neither an author index, nor an index of titles but only an index of first lines.

W. P. M.

A YEAR IN THE COUNTRY. By Sir W. Beach Thomas. Allan Wingate. 12s. 6d.

This is not a book to be taken up and read at a sitting. A collection of essays—or, better, perhaps—a naturalist's diary, covering twelve months—the matter is too varied to allow of its being assimilated in a hurry. The articles, contributed to the Observer over a number of years, from which this is a selection were, of course, meant to be read one at a time. The author has a very pleasant style, and there is endless variety in these pages: his interest is in everything that grows; all places seem equally dear to him. For pure enjoyment, I would prefer the book to be less diffuse, and with an unalterable core. I would like it to be all about a small private garden, or a copse beside a stream: the reader's heart to be quickened by the recurrence in the story of some rock cock block-anything, so long as it reminded him that he is still in the same place. The seasons lend infinite variety, anyhow. But this is really no criticism of the book. Nor is the fact that I never can forgive the author for preferring the thrush to the blackbird. Beside the austere poignancy of the blackbird's song, the thrush's melodious outburst is rhetoric!

We are told wise and lovely things about the snowdrop: the image drawn for us of this delicate flower lingers in the memory. Indeed, any lover of the open-air, of the countryside, cannot fail to discover many delights in this charming book, fittingly adorned with an attractive dust-jacket and with drawings by Philip Gough.

BLANAID SALKELD.

Walter Daniel's LIFE OF AILRED, Abbot of Rievaulx. Ed. by F. M. Powicke. Nelson. 15s.

In this age dark with ill discoveries and worldly anxieties, it is strange to read of the Cistercians. " . . . they shine as they walk with the whiteness of

snow" . . . "they venerate poverty, not the penury of the idle and negligent"—and here the editor quotes from St. Bernard: *perniciosa paupertas, penuria meritum*. It is well known that Cistercian monks go a hard way—owning nothing, eating little, knowing no comfort. Yet it is something of a revelation to read that "No one takes a step towards anything of his own free will. Everything they do is at the motion of the prelate's nod and they are turned aside by a like direction." We know of their silence. As St. Malachi said once: "We are simple men, seeking justice through silence." Women, hawks and dogs (except watchdogs, against thieves) may not enter their gates.

The name Rievaulx derives from a powerful stream, the Rie, which ran through a broad valley stretching on both sides. "High hills surround the valley encircling it like a crown. These are clothed by trees of various sorts and maintain in pleasant retreats the privacy of the vale." A long and very beautiful description of the landscape follows.

A fascinating bibliography is scattered through the Notes. There are some passing allusions to our St. Malachi: a contemporary of Ailred's—born in 1095—he died in 1148, in Clairvaux, with St. Bernard.

In the lengthy and learned Introduction we are given a very complete and living picture of the times. Religion and politics were one. Ailred was a powerful statesman: he was not brought up in King David's Court for nothing. He sided with Pope Alexander against the schismatic Cardinals. Later, when Edward the Confessor was canonised, Ailred was commissioned to write his Life. "The great ceremony, two years later, when the body of the saint was laid in the new shrine at Westminster, symbolised religious peace in the west of Europe as well as the union of Englishman and Norman." Thomas à Becket it was who, as the new Archbishop of Canterbury, presided at the translation of the saint.

Ailred, we are told, was a mighty letter-writer. Most of his correspondence is lost, unfortunately. A letter is extant—addressed to St. Thomas à Becket—which may have been written by Ailred, although it is signed M—for M and N are frequent symbols of anonymity. This letter is in reply to urgent appeals for support, to the Cistercians. One of Thomas à Becket's requests for their prayers may have been presented even "by Thomas à Becket's knight and companion and future murderer, Hugh de Morville, who went twenty miles out of his way to fulfil his commission."

One cannot read this delightful Life of Ailred by Walter Daniel, a fellow monk, without ardently desiring to read the Abbot's works. We see that his Christian Friendship—*Speculum Caritatis*—written at St. Bernard's instigation, has been translated by Hugh Talbot. But there is no mention of his Pastoral Prayer being obtainable in translation. In this book under review, the original Latin of the Life is printed side by side with the translation, as also with Daniel's Letter to Maurice, which follows the Life.

In his Pastoral Prayer, in a quotation given by the editor, Ailred cries: "Sweet Lord, I do not ask Thee to give me gold or silver or precious stones, but wisdom, that I may know how to rule Thy people." St. Ailred was a true guide and father to the monks under his care. His name which means All Counsel, fitted him well. But, above all, he was mighty in charity, and there are many stories in the Life to prove that 'charity can move mountains.'

There is much drama in the Life: the unstable monk, from time to time, trying to break free, always to be brought back by the force of Ailred's prayers. The holy Cainneac at dinner, hearing with his inner ear, Ailred's cry for his prayers, for the boat in which he and his companions are sailing is in danger of being overwhelmed in a storm. So Cainneac rushes from the Refectory with one shoe on and the other left behind in his haste—to the Church to pray—whereupon the storm at sea subsides. An unforgettable picture.

Having read this noble book, one is tempted to be guided by the editor's Notes and seek out a whole shelf-full of literature, further to refresh oneself in the living spirit of faith and holiness.

Happily, the world has still Cistercians; but we rarely see them: they live, toiling and praying, hidden from the world.

BLANAID SALKELD.

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF POLAND. From the Origins to Sobieski—1696. Cambridge University Press, London. 42/- Net.

Now when the English-speaking world is anxious to have some real insight into the history behind Poland's creation as a nation and the cause of the many invasions and persecutions she has endured—more than any other country in the world—at the hands and swords of invaders, the recent issue of this volume will be welcomed, and read with very sustained interest.

The publishers say it was planned to come out in two volumes in 1936 but that the war drove many of the scholars engaged on the work into exile; some into captivity; a few to death, that it took 11 years to complete, or more than four times as long as in peace time; and that of the 23 learned contributors, eight died in concentration camps, or as a result of their life and treatment in them. So tragedy still pursued those who tried to serve Poland.

The reader will find difficulty in putting aside this book once he becomes immersed in the many learned treatises it contains. He will find the 16 illustrations beautifully produced of some of the loveliest pieces of art and of architecture in Poland.

There are also 2 maps—(1) States ruled by the Jagiellions at the end of the reign of Casimer; and (2) The territorial development of the country. Perusal of this book will make it easy to understand the minds and character of the Polish peoples, who, between 1918 and 1937 built up their country from ashes and rubble to become again the envy and jealousy of neighbours. The Bibliography remains to be published as a concluding volume.

W. J. B.

THE SPANISH LABYRINTH. By Gerald Brenan. Cambridge University Press. 25s. net.

Of not many books can it truly be said that they are indispensable to a knowledge of modern Spain. Because this is true of *The Spanish Labyrinth*, the second edition of this scholarly and informative book will be welcomed. Mr. Brenan settled in Spain and farmed there for some years before the civil war. He writes, he tells us, with a sympathy for the Republican side, "for they were the people who, on the whole, seemed to me to have the greatest amount of justice and decency on their side and most people of good will in other countries supported them, and their cause was also that of the democracies. . . ."

It would be quite wrong, however, to consider this merely as a partisan book. The author's aim is to examine Spanish history, the essential facts of the social and political system, the character of the people and, with the aid of these factors, give an explanation of the course of events. His chapter on the agrarian question is a terrible record of grinding poverty. Threequarters of the population in Andalusia were hired labourers and, for more than half the year, they were unemployed. Landlords "cultivated only the best land and left the rest untilled. Starving labourers who attempted to plough it were beaten by the police." In 1930, we are told, over 200,000 labourers were unemployed in Andalusia during the greater part of the year, and, after 1930, this figure increased rapidly. The remedy for discontent and starvation was to double the number of the rural constabulary.

In the towns and the country conditions fostered social conflict, especially as the Spanish character favours extremism of the Right or the Left. Loose anarchist confederations grew up in the towns, mainly of a trade union character, without paid officials, capable of great sacrifices and much idealism in sporadic industrial outbursts. Mostly these groups boycotted politics and refused to vote, though, as the author shows, their neglect of politics grew out of a generation of political corruption. At one time, he remarks: "This was so much a matter of course that the election results were sometimes published in the official newspaper before they took place." There was a system of "*actas en blanco*," under which the Civil Governor filled in the results of the election. There was intimidation by landlords and—when electors were inclined to be obstinate—there was the *Partido de la Porra*, or Cudgel Party, who beat up stubborn voters. This happened in the village where the author lived as late as 1920.

After the Primo de Rivera dictatorship period there was a push on the Left and, by 1936, this reached its culmination in a Popular Front government. At this period the anarchists, though not officially connected with the Popular Front, voted for it. The army was tremendously over-staffed with officers and it was obvious that—following the traditional Spanish model—they would resist any change. But the anarchist character of the popular movement would not allow the Government to defend itself efficiently. The author finds much to admire in this anarchist outlook: there is, he says, heroism, nobility, readiness for sacrifice, idealism, but, unfortunately, not the capacity for victory.

The story of the intervention of the Italians and the German Nazis on the side of Franco has often been told, but it is given with authentic detail here. More curious is the estimate he makes of the support given by Stalin to the other side. The Spanish Communists were a small and insignificant section compared with the anarchists. But their possession of arms made them more important. They opposed anarchist terrorism: "Well-to-do Catholic orange growers in Valencia, peasants in Catalonia, small shopkeepers and business men, army officers and Government officials enrolled in their ranks. . . . Thus one had a strange and novel situation: on the one side stood the huge, compact proletariat of Barcelona with its long revolutionary tradition, and, on the other, the white-collar workers and *petite bourgeoisie* of the city, organised and armed by the Communist Party against it." That no element of the incongruous might be lacking, we are informed by the author (p. 323) that: "The Communists, who, to annoy the anarchists, had adopted a protective attitude towards the Church, took on themselves the task of sheltering priests."

Gerald Brenan is a guide to the complicated and contradictory twists and turns of the Spanish labyrinth. He speaks of the awful poverty, the repression, and the break in the national morale which accompanied the military dictatorship established by the aid of foreign arms. But the lasting value of this book lies in its careful analysis of Spanish character, its study of the various national movements, such as that of the Basques, and the wealth of knowledge it brings to bear on the underlying problems in Spain.

R. M. Fox.

MARY O'GRADY. By Mary Lavin. Michael Joseph, Ltd. 12s. 6d.

Miss Lavin's novel is the story of Mary O'Grady, the country girl from Tullamore, who loves and marries a Dublin tram driver : it is the simple life of a woman whose love dictates her days, love for her husband and for the children that are soon born to them—and for the first thirty pages or so it is exquisite. Truly and surely, with that gift which Miss Lavin has for understanding what life means to the simple, that gift of illumining the commonplace and making touching the ordinary, she moves over Mary's married life in Dublin, with its babies coming like the seasons, and the young woman's instinct for beauty fastening itself upon the grass of a vacant building lot. Miss Lavin's rich and poetic powers of writing are well seen in what she makes of that grass.

But this enchanting prelude, at once momentarily satisfying us and sending our expectation questing ahead for its development, is not followed by a body of work equal to it. I do not mean to suggest that the level of the writing does not rise through the book to the standard of the opening. All through there are passages of great beauty and grace—it would hardly be Miss Lavin's, if this could not be said of it. But the development of the theme does not equal as a whole the opening; still less does it swell out from it, and the reader ends baffled and disappointed.

What happens is that into the closed, warm and loving world of Mary O'Grady, whose only weapon against Fate itself is unquestioning affection, disaster on disaster crowds. Death, madness, illness, estrangement stalk in, as in an Elizabethan play. Tragedy supplants idyll and lyric; or rather, what should be tragedy, but remains only inexplicable calamity, supplants early happiness.

Mary O'Grady to be a great novel would need to be a tragic novel. Tragedy is not a mere chronicle of suffering and horror. It is a fitting of a tale of suffering and horror to some design, some general apprehension of life and its movements. This is where Miss Lavin fails. Disaster comes, but we have no assurance that Miss Lavin knows why any more than we do. Understanding of the simple is admirable : but identification of the author with the simple is failure for a novelist and too often Miss Lavin gives us the impression that she is identifying herself with her simple characters, identifying herself with their ignorance and credulity.

Moreover, she sometimes leaves us wondering on what plane of presentation she desires to set her characters. This novel, one would have said, is intended to be fully realistic, and yet Tom's illness, which smites him suddenly in the night, is neither prepared nor explained : the reader has the sensation of stepping suddenly into a world of fantasy. If we could feel this to be part of a plan, we could accept it, but it has no appearance of plan; rather it seems arbitrary, or if not arbitrary, awkward or unskilled.

Finally, the mechanical details of the writing are often handled very carelessly. Miss Lavin's punctuation, for instance, is extremely capricious. Again if we could feel that this was deliberate, that Miss Lavin had theories about punctuation which she was exemplifying, we could be prepared to accept them. But sheer carelessness and not deliberation seems to be the explanation.

Mary O'Grady, therefore, full of evidence as it is of the writer's talent, is yet a disappointing book. It is disappointing because this extraordinary talent, which no one doubts, has as yet not found its appropriate outlet in the novel. It is a talent highly poetic, sensitive and subtle in many directions, which to use Coleridge's words of Wordsworth has the power to throw the colouring of the ideal world over the ordinary things of life, and yet which has not refined itself of much dross, which still lies fitful and gleaming, embedded in a mass of the arbitrary, the ludicrous and the inexplicable. If Miss Lavin could cut away these needs, there would shine a jewel indeed.

LORNA REYNOLDS.

THREE NOVELS. By Ronald Firbank. Duckworth. 18s.

A year ago Messrs. Duckworth made five of Firbank's novels available in a single volume and some readers were ungracious enough to complain that *Vain-glory* or *Caprice* had been omitted in favour of less essentially characteristic work. Now the same publishers have printed both of these together with *Inclinations* and a subtle study of Firbank's genius by an American critic, Ernest Jones, in a second single volume. It is all too easy to become heavy in attempting to appraise a style so airily precise, so deliberately swift, and a content so determined not to stand still under scrutiny. Yet Mr. Jones is right to force attention upon the consummate, controlled artistry of the one and the ever-present "sense of mortality" underlying the frivolities of the other. And he is right to insist that the devoted, highly productive artist of the last ten years should not be forgotten for the sake of the eccentric, elusive, affected, spoilt creature, flitting about the world in "the seemingly sterile pursuit of the amusing and the beautiful." Lacking a sense of evil and always fearful of emotion, Firbank could never be a great novelist: his Evil is naughtiness, his Sin mere fun, his tragedy the fastening of humanity's sad, insatiable longing for perfection upon objects ridiculous or trivial in themselves. His satire neither begins nor ends in any *saeva indignatio*. He is too uninvolved himself and deflation is his weapon. His laughter—that silent convulsion which would overcome him so that he had to lay down his pen—is hardly ever hearty laughter and falls to a giggle or a sly snicker at the absurdities of perverted love. Awareness of beauty and transience, a longing amid weariness for some goal, or glory, or affection—these are the constants which hold his mocking, perverse, occasionally obscene inconsequence together. These and a style laboriously perfected to its apparently carefree purposes preserve the true comedy and the satiric intention amidst the affectations and artificialities of his idle world.

W. P. M.

ILLUSTRATED ENGLISH SOCIAL HISTORY. Volume Two. The Age of Shakespeare and The Stuart Period. By G. M. Trevelyan. Longmans. 18s.

Dr. Trevelyan in his introduction to the present volume reminds the reader that the economic and social aspects of life in the Elizabethan and Stuart periods

"are characterized by fruition and steady growth." Mrs. Ruth C. Wright has again chosen very fine contemporary illustrations 'to underline that fact; but "whereas MSS. supplied the greater part of the illustrative commentary for the mediaeval and early Tudor period in Volume I, printed books and engravings, ballads, broadsides and tracts largely provide the material for the late Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." As in the first volume, later drawings and photographs have also been used with discrimination. This edition of Dr. Trevelyan's great work, with Mrs. Wright's detailed notes on the colour and gravure plates, makes of the past a wonderfully vivid landscape whose figures have immediacy and vigorous life.

SIR TOBIE MATHEW. By David Mathew.

EDWARD GARNETT. By H. E. Bates.

Personal Portraits Series. Max Parrish. 6s. each.

Dr. Mathew begins the urban, if brief, study of his ancestor:

"He was the close disciple and confidant of Francis Bacon. He made the first English translation of the *Confessions of St. Augustine*. He was long a figure at the English Court and sensitive to its transitions. His account of his submission to the Church of Rome stands almost at the head of the long series of recitals of such conversions. He was one of the great European travellers of his day, always along the highways of privileged travel. He was in some respects the very type of the cosmopolitan Englishman of his place and century. His character has always puzzled and eluded me, and this is an attempt to disentangle the complex strands."

Tobie was a considerable disappointment to his father, who was Archbishop of York, and to his mother; there seemed no place for him in a vigorous age, and his friendship with Bacon measured his own detachment, and scepticism about his contemporaries. His visit to Italy, conversion, imprisonment in London and exile abroad, his friends, literary activities, the talent for diplomacy that was at last utilized by the English Court, his final retirement to the Low Countries, where he died in 1655, are recounted with a felicity and scholarship that make this a notable essay.

From his first encounter, as a young man, with the "semi-patriarchal, semi-diabolical figure" of Edward Garnett, Mr. Bates was to be fascinated by, and grateful to, the man whose criticism, experience and influence were always so generously at the disposal of writers. "All his judgments, though so often withering and terrifying, were themselves creative and rose from an amazingly sure and instinctive understanding of the creative mind"; and just how invaluable his drastic enlightenment was to the struggling writer is emphasized here. Visits to the Garnett household, conversations and the letters received contribute to this personal and appreciative record of an eccentric, deeply perceptive and remarkable literary figure.

VIEWS OF ATTICA. By Rex Warner. John Lehmann. 15s.

Mr. Warner was Director of the British Institute in Athens from 1945-1947; and his book is an account of places and buildings in the vicinity of Athens with which he became familiar. To describe Greece is impossible, therefore "I shall

attempt the objectivity of the lover rather than that of the scientist, and shall describe isolated scenes and characters rather than try to paint a broad and comprehensive picture of a country and its people." For him the past and the present were fused into one deeply moving reality. Everywhere he was conscious of "the real, pervading and immensely powerful genius of the place;" even in the "shrill screams of mothers to their children whose names, screeched from the house-tops, may be Clytemnestra or Aspasia, syllables which, like the air itself, seem timeless, vivid, ancient in a continual present." Mr. Warner's descriptions of visits to such famous places as the Acropolis, Daphni, Mount Hymettus, Salamis, Mycenae form the main part of the book; but there are also accounts of his meetings with the Greek poets, George Seferis and Angelos Sikelianos, and with the guerrillas, of inns and their food and wine, the dancing, religious and other festivals that he saw, of the work done by the Institute. About the political situation he is cautious, and insists that his book is in any case devoted to the perfection that he so richly found.

There is an odd diffidence in the writing, especially noticeable in the many references to his 'digressions,' to the fact that his excursions with the reader are merely imagined; and in the conscious detachment of the style: "One is anxious to ascend the rock itself, although if one could curb one's anxiety, one might well go first a little distance to the left. . . ." *Views of Attica* has, however, considerable charm; and the reader is aware that the unassuming scholarship and delicate restraint are the measure of the author's reverent love for Greece.

BEAUTIFUL LONDON. By H. Gernsheim. 103 photographs. Phaidon Press. 17s. 6d.

As Mr. Pope-Hennessy writes in his foreword to this collection of superb photographs: "London is no longer, at first sight, overtly beautiful"; but the camera has been so used here that "Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie . . . all bright and glittering in the smokeless air."

The fan-vaulted ceiling of the Great Hall of Hampton Court Palace, the spiral staircase in the Clock Tower of St. Paul's Cathedral, Adam exteriors, early squares, some of the notable clubs, the Regency style of Carlton House Terrace, the Admiralty, a view from St. James's Park towards Whitehall, the royal effigies in Westminster Abbey, the stag at the feet of Lady Margaret Beaufort and a charmingly reflective cherub from Henry VII's tomb, some of the monuments and the cloisters, the Thames bridges, the Royal Naval College at Greenwich and the Queen's House designed by Inigo Jones, fine interiors like the staircase at Ashburnham House: these are but some of the subjects Mr. Gernsheim has chosen and portrayed with exquisite effect. The photographs and the discriminating introduction make this a book of unusual quality and dignity, the more to be valued as one looks at the tragic ruin of Wren's St. Mary-Le-Bow and remembers how much else of beauty perished in the last war.

SWISS ENCHANTMENT. By Monk Gibbon. Evans Brothers. 10s. 6d.

Dr. Gibbon has written an agreeable guide-book to Switzerland; but to those who know the country well or who ask from the traveller a record of odd encounters and leisurely conversation, of sharp and lingering flavours, it will seem rather a task dutifully performed. His conscientious desire to give a general

survey of the cantons with discreetly arranged information about Swiss history, form of government, museums and industry, and the opinions of the famous, is perhaps at fault. He describes the very well-known places with enthusiasm but also in the familiar terms of the earnest and appreciative tourist. It is all carefully and strenuously planned; but it would have been so much more entertaining had Dr. Gibbon idled more in the small villages, explored the fascinating back streets of the towns, and stayed, for instance, with the unusual art colony at Dornach. Expensive hotels and useful introductions rarely add to the diversions of a travel book, and *Swiss Enchantment* is no exception. Sometimes the matter is astonishingly trivial, as when at Geneva, in the Musée d'Art d'Histoire, he writes:

"I saw a living Swiss artist at work when I came the third time, that talented painter, Maurice Barraud, who wore a navy blue beret and who was taking five minutes' relaxation on a wooden stool in front of a great fresco which he is painting in a recessed archway half-way up the staircase."

and leaves it at that. It is unfortunate, for when Dr. Gibbon refers to his personal pleasures and distastes he communicates them exceedingly well: the truly remarkable Holbein at Basle, his reactions to the Siegfried and Maginot Line fortresses, an evening at the little theatre in Baden, the formidable telesiege at St. Cergue, the baroque of the abbey church at Einsiedeln, the charm of Solothurn, his perennial delight in Château d'Oex. *Swiss Enchantment* is, however, an admirable, comprehensive, and beautifully illustrated handbook for those who have yet to visit the country.

A BIOGRAPHER'S NOTEBOOK. By Hector Bolitho. Longmans. 12s. 6d.

Mr. Bolitho writes with an intimate liveliness and an ease that almost persuade the reader of the simplicity of his biographical labours; but without the historical and political knowledge, the tact and sympathy that he brings to his able portraits the rest would have been in vain: the cordial reception by royalty, the willingly-given access to fascinating documents, the amusing and picturesque side of his often fatiguing travels.

The long section on Queen Marie of Roumania includes many of the letters she wrote to a friend in America whom she never met. Obviously she enjoyed discussing with astonishing frankness herself, her experiences, other royalty; and her letters reveal a vivacious and intelligent woman of great if commonplace charm. The chapter on the Prince Consort's mother, the Duchess Louise of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha gives the circumstances of her life and divorce; and it is evident that Mr. Bolitho has been enchanted by the frivolous and wistful little duchess. The letters written by Dean Stanley to his family when, very gloomily, he consented to accompany the Prince of Wales to the Near East in 1862 are entertaining. He began almost at once:

"It is hardly possible to over-estimate the difficulty of producing any impression on a mind with no previous knowledge, or interest to be awakened. . . . I cannot bring myself to pour words into unwilling and indifferent ears."

and was impatient when his royal pupil abandoned the tombs of Egypt in order to smoke and read *East Lynne* in front of his tent, That the journey ended with

their becoming firm friends was due as much to the tolerance and docility of the pupil as to the learned enthusiasms of a conscientious tutor labouring under Queen Victoria's expectations. The account of Mr. Bolitho's stay in King Abdullah's palace is a skilful piece of writing, as is the study of seven Quaker women based on the journals of a Worcestershire family. There is also a selection from the letters of Mowbray Morris—engaging, emphatic letters about the late Victorian literary scene. Their wilful, ardent, criticism will seem to many readers the best part of an agreeable book.

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD. By Charles Dickens: The Chiltern Library. John Lehmann. 8s. 6d.

This fine fragment, as long as the average modern novel, offers the curious reader a double mystery—that deliberately fabricated by Charles Dickens, and that contrived by Fate and the author's untimely death in 1870. The style is Dickens with a difference. The broadly comic spirit and invention are not present with quite the same gusto; but, in revenge, there is a mellow beauty of prose style, a brooding atmosphere, a certain nostalgic charm that one may perhaps miss in the other novels. At times one might even suspect that the great English optimist and depicter of merry Christmas and goodwill on earth had experienced doubts and turned to an uneasy questioning as to whether, after all, the Universe was so completely benevolent towards Man.

Certainly the spirit of Evil steals soft-footed amid the shadows that gather around the Cathedral of Cloisterham. The heavy fumes of opium stir in these pages, more like a nightmare than a normal dream; and the dark alley, the sinister court and the chill dampness of the graveyard seem more prevailing than busy market-place or jovial tavern.

The question of who murdered Edwin Drood, of who *thought* he murdered him, and such problems as whether Drood would have actually reappeared alive, to denounce Jasper, these things seem to the reviewer as vain as the song the Sirens sang and the name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women. One may hazard a wide solution, if so disposed. But Edwin Drood is not the modern Whodunit. Here is no work of mere sterile ingenuity but a great fragment by a great writer.

Dickens's "great idea" to mystify his public is scarcely worth our seeking. However influenced by Wilkie Collins our author would not be likely to descend from the throne of genius to sit on the footstool of virtuosity. True, an amiable young man is murdered; but already in early chapters of the book sympathy has been shifted away from Drood; and, in the last written chapters, a gallant sailor-hero has entered the life of the fair and blushing Rosa Bud. Wisdom would appear to commend a straightforward enjoyment of twenty-three fine narrative chapters; for, though Poe pointed out that surprise is an element in aesthetic pleasure, he was far from claiming that it was the most important or the most enjoyable. On these matters, Mr. Michael Innes, himself a master of the mystery-story, writes a fine introduction to the book. M. C.

NATURAL LAW. An Introduction to Legal Philosophy. By A. P. d'Entrèves. Hutchinson's University Library. 7s. 6d.

This concise and valuable study of the idea of natural law, its creative and constructive force, and its continuing vitality in western European thought combines the historical and philosophical approach to consider its function in ethics,

politics and jurisprudence. After illustrating the significance of the doctrine in the founding of "a system of laws of universal validity," in "the great medieval synthesis of goldly and of worldly wisdom," and in the formulation of ideals of freedom and equality that were to inspire the French and American revolutions, Dr. d'Entrèves examines the present situation from the point of view that "legal and political philosophy are nothing else than natural law writ large."

The whole of his lucid and critical essay supports the argument that it is the assertion that law is a part of ethics.

"For if we admit that the very assertion of natural law is an assertion that law is a part of ethics, its essential function can appear only as that of mediating between the moral sphere and the sphere of law proper. The notion of natural law partakes at the same time of a legal and of a moral character. Perhaps the best description of natural law is that it provides a name for the point of intersection between law and morals. Whether such a point of intersection exists is therefore the ultimate test of the validity of all natural law thinking."

He believes that it does exist and that, called natural law for over two thousand years, it is both the origin of law and the beginning of moral life.

CONFETTI CAN BE RED. By Marten Cumberland. Hurst and Blackett. 9s. 6d.

The publisher's description of this new Saturnin Dax story as a mystery thriller is accurate. And who can blame Marten Cumberland if he deserts the strict confines of the detective story? The wider public was never capable of making any distinction, and the puzzle plot epitomised in the term "Whodunit" is tiresome to manipulate. The newest technique of mystification keeps us guessing, not merely the identity of the villain, but what the story is all about. *Confetti Can Be Red* derives from current tendencies, but avoids excessive horrors. The hero and heroine are on their honeymoon; a gang is on their track; it is some time before we know what they are all up to, but, in Book Two, Saturnin Dax finds out and builds up to a satisfactory climax. The straightforward plot formula has been inverted. It is a tricky method to have the police retrace a series of events already told once, but we are in experienced hands and are seldom conscious of repetition. In the meantime, we have the pleasure of following the characters about Paris. The background and detail are as well done as ever, without being allowed to hold up the plot. Brief descriptive notes and economical dialogue hit off the types who play minor parts. Practice in writing for the stage underlies this light, competent touch.

It is a pleasure to read a crime story in which the police work is so sound. All the Saturnin Dax books are more in the vein of the French *roman policier* than the English detective story. Marten Cumberland understands the workings of the Préfecture (not to be confused with the Surêté), and his picture of the Paris underworld is contemporary, with currency rackets and post-resistance undercurrents. Some of the Dax series are being issued by the *Librairie des Champs Elysees* in its *Collection Le Masque*.

Confetti Can Be Red may be recommended as a book to take on the journey to Le Bourget. It tells you where to shop and what to drink and how much to tip, whether or not to dress for the Opera, not to neglect the Jardin d'Acclimatation, and especially to visit the Forest of Fontainebleau.

S. P.